

YORKTOWN CLIPPINGS

Compiled by Thelma Hansford, 1973

# Yorktown Battlefield Becomes an International Shrine.

By D. PEALE POLE, YORKTOWN.

At a meeting in Philadelphia recently the contract was awarded for the construction of the Yorktown Manor and Country Club, at Yorktown, Va., to the A. A. Lane Construction Company of Cleveland, Ohio, at a cost of approximately \$1,300,000, building operations to begin at once. The buildings will be of brick and limestone trim, of the Virginia Colonial manor type, plans calling for 300 rooms.

Historic Yorktown, with the establishment of the "World's Country Club," is to be made an international shrine, a show place of America. Already the membership consists of diplomats and prominent people of 15 foreign countries, Presidents of South American republics and representative people from all over the United States, uniting to restore and to perpetuate this glorious spot where American independence was won. Those who become charter life members in the movement may have the feeling of satisfaction that they are those who helped to establish this living memorial to Revolutionary patriots who achieved American independence at Yorktown for all time to come.

After 144 years of neglect, the battlefield of Yorktown, scene of one of the greatest and most significant military dramas in American history, has been restored. The breastworks, redoubts and famous fortifications, long lost under the tangle of wild honeysuckle, have been cleared, the native trees and shrubs preserved and that noble sweep of land where Lord Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington has been given a guarantee of perpetual care and preservation.

No ordinary restoration this. Over part of that land where Washington, Lafayette, Rochambeau and those other immortals pressed onward in the last battle of the Revolutionary war there sweeps the velvet green of what is probably one of the finest golf courses in the United States. The ramparts they stormed, reverently attended and preserved stand like old Roman ruins, sleeping forever in the sunlight. But in the shadow of them slopes the flawless emerald of the first green. Every hole on this course, which can surely be called unique in the world, has been named for one of the great in that galaxy of greatness which made history at Yorktown. The sand-boxes were cast from an exploded shell excavated in the ruins of a dwelling historically important, but gradually moldering into disintegration, just off the village street.

Not only do the golf links stretch over this land where every foot of ground has its own story of heroism and achievement; here, too, vast hunting and shooting preserves extend. For the horseman there are miles of bridle paths through the pines and along the high river bluffs replete with historic legend. The peninsula of Virginia, with its wealth of other forms of recreation, including swimming, salt-water bathing, fishing and yachting. York River oysters are famous, and likewise its clams and crabs. The finny tribe are more than numerous and are uncommonly accommodating. Yorktown still remains a rendezvous for the Atlantic Fleet and many prominent yachtsmen. Steps already have been taken to organize one of the finest yacht clubs in the world in connection with the club.

And, shortly, on the highest plateau of the battlefield overlooking the river and Chesapeake Bay there will arise the manor which will house this great national country club, or, rather, international country club, as seems more fitting to call it. For, side by side with the honorary life membership of President Coolidge and Gen. John J. Pershing, Governors of states and other prominent personages of America, stand the names of the present Marquis de Lafayette, the Marquis de Rochambeau, Comte de Grasse and His Royal Highness, the Duke of York, after whose ancestor the town was named.

Thus, it becomes a new sort of patriotic shrine, the first of its kind in the world; yet in line with the modern spirit—for the use of the living, the monument erected to the past.

Yorktown is saved from becoming a commercial enterprise. Fifteen years ago certain interests contemplated erecting a cement plant on the battlefield, where it had been discovered the land was rich in a deposit of marl used in the manufacture of cement. At this juncture John F. Braun, a citizen of Philadelphia, stepped in and made the first move towards saving Yorktown. In mining the marl through the operation of steam shovels, and the undermining of the very ground, would have meant the complete destruction of the famous battlefield. The land was purchased which comprised the principal forts, ramparts and intrenchments used and constructed by the British during the siege and battle. Attempts have been made again and again to interest the National Government, state governments and various patriotic societies in Yorktown to establish a national park, but without success. The neglect of 140 years was still upon the ground in 1923. Finally, Mr. Braun headed a group of patriotic citizens who, of their own volition and dubious of Congressional aid, recently undertook the work of rehabilitating the sacred site at Yorktown with a view to making it a national patriotic shrine.

After carefully considering various plans, a happy solution was found for the Yorktown problem—a practical plan which will restore and beautify the old battlefield and at the same time will provide needed and agreeable accommodations for visitors to Yorktown. These objects, it was agreed, could best be accomplished through the establishment of a country club. So the Yorktown Country Club has undertaken to restore the famous battlefield and to convert the surrounding territory into a beautiful park.

Remarkable response on all sides followed the making known these plans. The Government gave the heartiest co-operation. Patriotic societies joined in the movement. Government officials and prominent citizens evinced a desire to help. Besides President Coolidge and General Pershing, other founder and life members are: Chief Justice and former President William Howard Taft, Viscountess Astor, Representatives Nicholas Longworth, Cyrus H. K. Curtis, Mrs. Edward Bok, Edward A. Alderman, Mrs. George W. Blow, Howard E. Cole, Governor Albert C. Ritchie, of Maryland, Mrs. Helen N. Smith, Alexander Van Rensselaer, Theodore Roosevelt, John Garland Pollard, Judge Howard Ferris, John F. Braun, J. E. Bacon, Harlan F. Stone, William Goodman, Secretary Curtis D. Wilbur, former Governor Charles S. Whitman of New York, Governor E. Lee Trinkle of Virginia, and others.

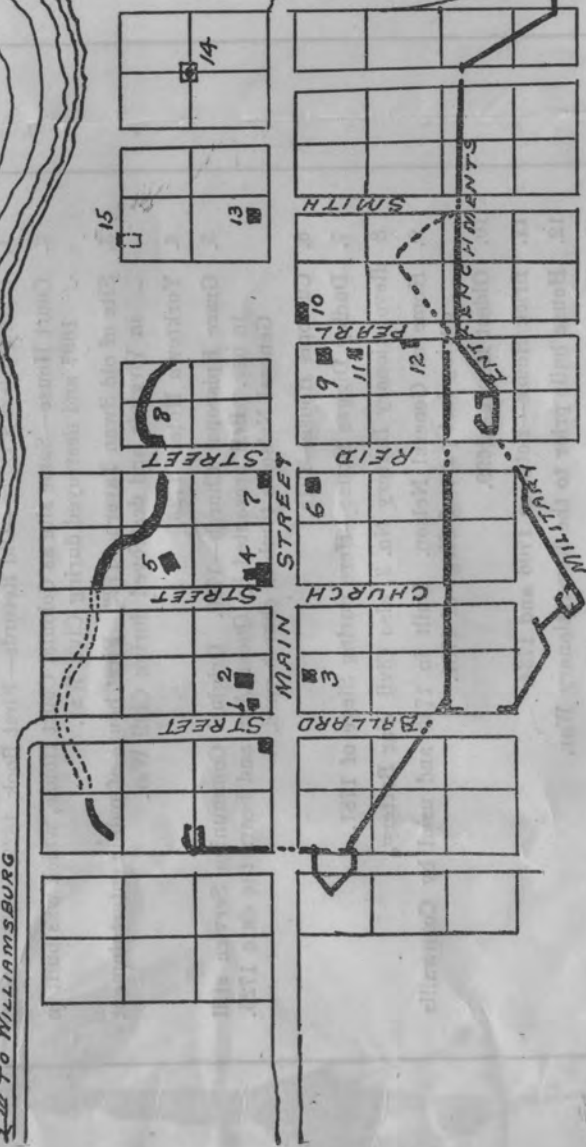
Perhaps most picturesque of all are the memberships of the descendants of the great Frenchmen who so valiantly served America during the siege and helped win American Independence. But other notable Frenchmen as well have joined in the movement. Marshal Foch is an honorary life member; so are the Duc de Noailles, Marquis de Chambrun and the Baron de Montesquieu. Englishmen, though their kinsmen met defeat in the famous nineteen-day siege, are enrolled. The honor memberships as well include the British Ambassador, Sir Esme Howard, and Field Marshal Earl Haig. Italy, Belgium and Sweden likewise are represented by members of their nobility.

This much seems certain: No other country club in the world possesses the historic setting of Yorktown, and had it not been for Yorktown we might not celebrate the "Glorious Fourth." True, the Declaration of Independence had been written, but not until five years afterward, on October 19, 1787 did it become effective.

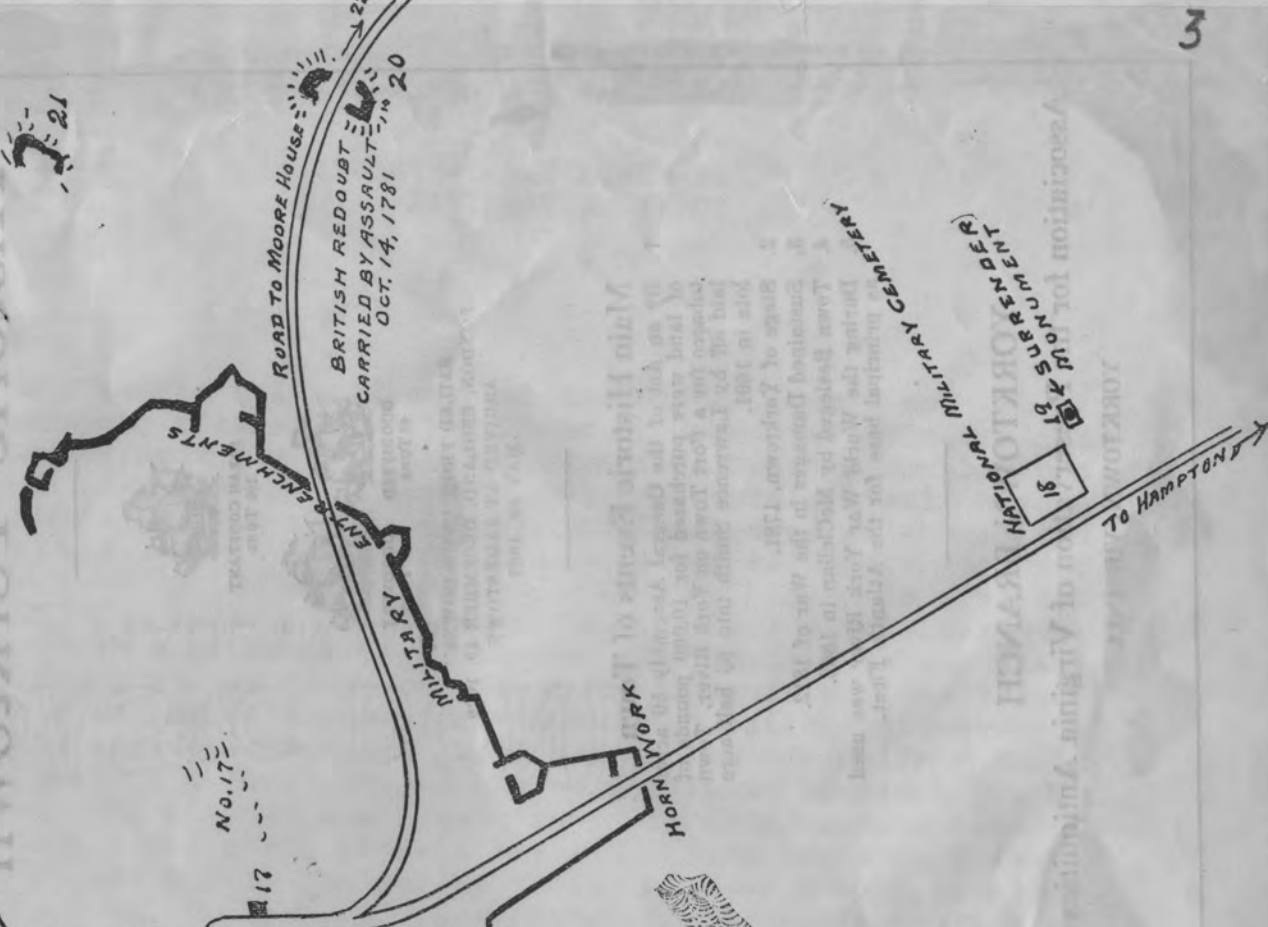
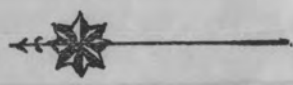
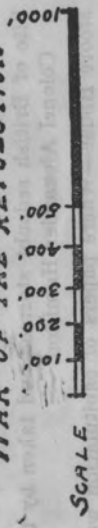
of the Lower Peninsula locating the Battle of Big Bethel, June 10, 1861; the Siege of Yorktown, April 5—May 4, 1862; and the Battle of Williamsburg, May 5, 1862.

YORK RIVER

TO WILLIAMSBURG



MAP OF YORKTOWN, VA.  
SHOWING  
BRITISH MILITARY ENTRENCHMENTS  
WAR OF THE REVOLUTION



Historic Yorktown

44  
THE PENINSULA CAMPAIGN:  
YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA

The first Confederate defense line lay across the Peninsula at Yorktown. In reality it was hastily prepared and undermanned; but to the Union soldiers the fortifications seemed like "miniature mountain ranges, deeply ditched, and revetted with sods, fascines, hurdles, and sand bags. Along the York riverside there were water batteries of surpassing beauty, that seemed, at a little distance, successions of gentle terraces. Their pieces were likewise of enormous calibre, and their number almost incredible. The advanced line of fortifications stretched from the mouth of Warwick Creek, (currently spelled Warwick Creek), on the south, to a point fifteen miles distant on the York. The remote series consisted of six forts of massive size and height, fronted by swamps and flooded meadows, with frequent creeks and ravines interposing; sharp fraise and abatis planted against scarp and slope, pointed eastward. There were two water batteries, of six and four thirty-two Columbiads respectively.

From the outset, the commander of the Union forces at Yorktown, Major General George Brinton McClellan, realized his problem of supply was difficult; and it was bound to become increasingly so as he progressed up the Peninsula. His quartermaster's department struggled with demands for horses for artillery and cavalry, tents, camp and garrison equipment, forage, lumber, barracks, hospitals, ambulances, clothes for the army, and all materials for camp. Several thousand wagons, and the Richmond & York River Railroad, were employed for land-transportation; and steam-vessels, brigs, schooners, sloops, and barges, almost without number, brought the supplies. Still McClellan demanded more supplies and reinforcements. "Wagons and troops" he called "absolutely necessary to enable me to advance to Richmond. I have by no means the transportation I must have to move my army even a few miles."

Holding the Confederate line until reinforcement could be drawn from General Joseph Johnston's army was Major General John Bankhead Magruder. Fond of amateur theatrics, the general had now every opportunity to indulge his talent. He marched a couple of regiments through a clearing, in sight of the Federal advance guard, double-quickened them around a little forest out of sight, and then marched them through the clearing-over and over, like a stage manager using a dozen adonoidal spear carriers to represent Caesar's legions.

5  
Reconnoitering Union officers concluded that the enemy was in strong force and very strong position, McClellan ordered a siege. As Johnston said, "No one but McClellan would have hesitated to attack."

For nearly a month McClellan was detained at Yorktown completely losing any advantage that surprise might have given his Peninsula campaign. No daring assaults and spectacular tactics; he was going to wage war by the books. "I have brought forty heavy guns in battery," he reported on April 23; "to-morrow night I hope to have twelve new guns and five to ten heavy mortars in battery.... I will not open fire unless the enemy annoys us, hoping to get all the guns in battery and the trenches well advanced before meeting with serious opposition."

McClellan christened his headquarters near Yorktown Camp Winfield Scott, and he pitched his tent on a magnificent plateau in the midst of 30,000 men. Less than two miles from the Confederate lines, it was screened by high trees. Union siege preparations were hastened. "Steam sawmills are hard at work all around turning out material for the fortifications," reported an English newspaper man, "and my glass shows me companies of men in the distance building bridges and trains of wagons passing to and fro in all directions. It is a panorama far too grand and extended for words to describe accurately."

Laboriously McClellan brought up 13-inch mortars, each weighing 20,000 pounds; and by the night of May 3 all the batteries were completed and nearly all armed. The big guns never fired a shot, for early the next morning the Confederates withdrew. For hours the withdrawal was undetected, for, as the Comte de Paris remarked, "they were not early risers in the Union armies." "The disappointment was so great at the sudden departure of the Confederates that at first it could not be believed; and when the evidence was conclusive, everything had to be organized for an advance, which had not been contemplated." The troops had eaten nothing; the rations had not been distributed; many regiments had sent their wagons to a distance of several leagues to obtain them. In short, the cavalry division only took up its line of march between ten and eleven o'clock.... "The Confederates had escaped."

"I do not want these rascals to get away from me without a sound drubbing," McClellan wrote; but when the Federals caught up with the retreating Confederates at Williamsburg the Union commander was still in Yorktown. In a confused and planless operation Union advance units were thrown back by fierce fire from the Confederate rear guard.

This concludes the importance of Yorktown in the Civil War But Yorktown was yet to be of more importance later on in history in World War I and World War II.

6

## THE YORKTOWN NATIONAL CEMETERY

This site was selected in 1866 as a good cemetery location in the general vicinity of various Civil War battlefields and scenes of action related particularly to the Peninsular Campaign of 1862 when General George B. McClellan was moving toward Richmond, the Confederate capital. The cemetery lay close to, and south of, the Confederate line about Yorktown and in the immediate area of the battleground of 1781 where American and French troops won the climactic struggle in the American Revolution.

There are 1,596 marked graves in the cemetery. Of the total of 2,183 burials 747 are of known persons and 1,436 unknown. Those buried here were for the most part Union Army soldiers although 10 Confederate soldiers and 3 wives are also identified. In an inspection made in 1868, it was then reported that:

The interments number twenty-one hundred and eighty (2,180) of which number eleven (11) officers, seven hundred and sixteen (716) white soldiers, four (4) sailors, six (6) colored soldiers, and eight (8) citizens are known and two (2) officers, fourteen hundred and twenty-two (1,422) white soldiers, five (5) colored soldiers, and six (6) citizens are unknown. Besides the burials at the cemetery, bodies were removed from Williamsburg in James City County, and altogether from twenty-seven different places in the surrounding country, within a distance of fifty miles.

Those nearby points included White House Landing, King and Queen Courthouse, Cumberland Landing, West Point, and Warwick Courthouse.

-----

## HISTORICAL YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA



1924. CHANDLER Building. Built by G. Tyzer in 1880 prior to the '81 Centennial and opened as a large general store as well as hardware and liquor on first floor. The second floor was given over to clothing and furniture. He went broke in a few years and in the middle 90s J. R. Chandler purchased this building and house along right side. He had a woodworking shop, built carriages, made wheels and did general blacksmithing. Where the single door is along the left side, there were large double doors to move the carriages in and out. In 1908 bought by American Cement Engineering Company as offices and laboratory. House on right was torn down. Had sufficient money to build plant and purchase enough land to supply marl but over zealous land buyers, spent all available money for land, even as far down as Poquoson. Came

time to build plant and no money left. Ended up with the McAvay Trustee, owning this building, hotel and thousands of acres of land. Rented by H. M. Clements of Lee Hall as general store.

During First World War the second floor was partitioned into bedroom and used as an annex to the Hotel. The Masons, in early 20's rented the rear half of the second floor and remained there until their building was built on Ballard Street. In 1925, building was remodeled by Howard Ferris Trustee with a drug store on the right side and post office on the left. Masons still had second floor rear. Small buildings in left background were garages for cars of Howard Ferris Trustee and for a Delco System to furnish lights in Hotel. Note lines on left side of building.



JOHN BANNISTER — Ex-slave — lived in Uniontown — used ox to haul water which he sometimes sold. Church in right background — shows steeple or belfry — added in 1907 by Bradley and Chandler. Prior to this there was no belfry and the old bell was mounted on four chestnut posts in the rear yard of the church. This belfry taken off and a new one installed by Amos Dadds in early thirties. Left background home of Rodgers.



1924. Coach used by D. W. Griffith in filming "America." In background (approximate site of present Apothecary Shop) is Tignor's store and in the background to right is the old Courthouse (built about 1900). Judge Sydney Smith's 1917 Ford. Courthouse burned. Present one built on site.



### BRICK KILN EXPOSED DURING HURRICANE OF 1933

During a hurricane in 1933 a brick kiln became exposed on the shore of the York River, eight hundred feet west of the Station pier.

### SITE OF BELLFIELD PLANTATION



The site of the Bellfield Plantation was located by accident when the Navy took up a tree and uncovered building foundations. In 1932 and 1933, the site was excavated by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Iron pins now mark the limits of the basement. They also found a bricked tunnel 47 inches tall sloping down to the river. Chances are that this was a smuggling tunnel for tea and commodities, not slaves. There are references to such tunnels in other James River homes.



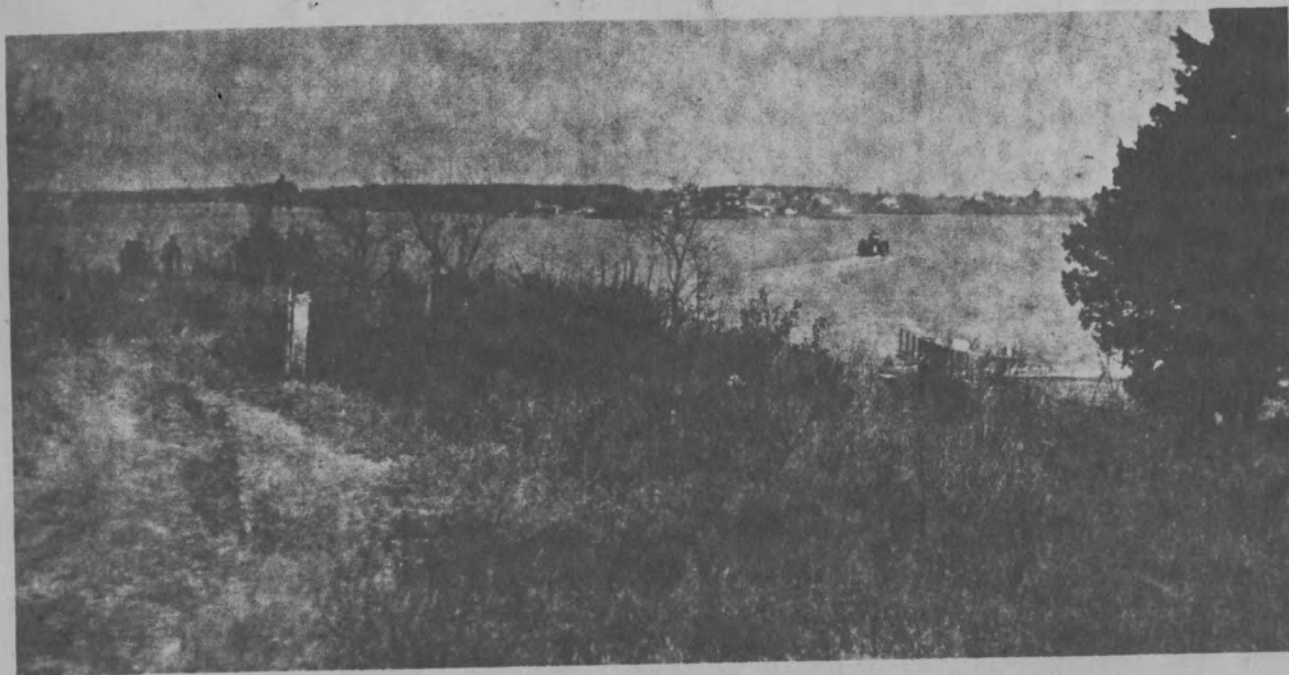
The two pictured grave markers are typical of those used on the Hampton Parish Church site (Cheesecake) Kiskiskiak.



1924. West House — now known as Dudley Diggs House. Bought by Judge Sydney Smith about 1900. 1917 Ford beside house. Gnarled mulberry trees were brought here for the silk industry. The silk worms fed on the leaves and these mulberries bore no fruit.



This Monument was built with private capital for the 1881 Centennial. It replaced a smaller monument that had been built years before but was in bad state of repair in 1880. Torn down in 30's. Located at back righthand corner of National Cemetery.



1925

New ferry and Navy HS-2 Seaplane. Roadway at left led to York Beach Inn but now is site of Duke of York Motel.



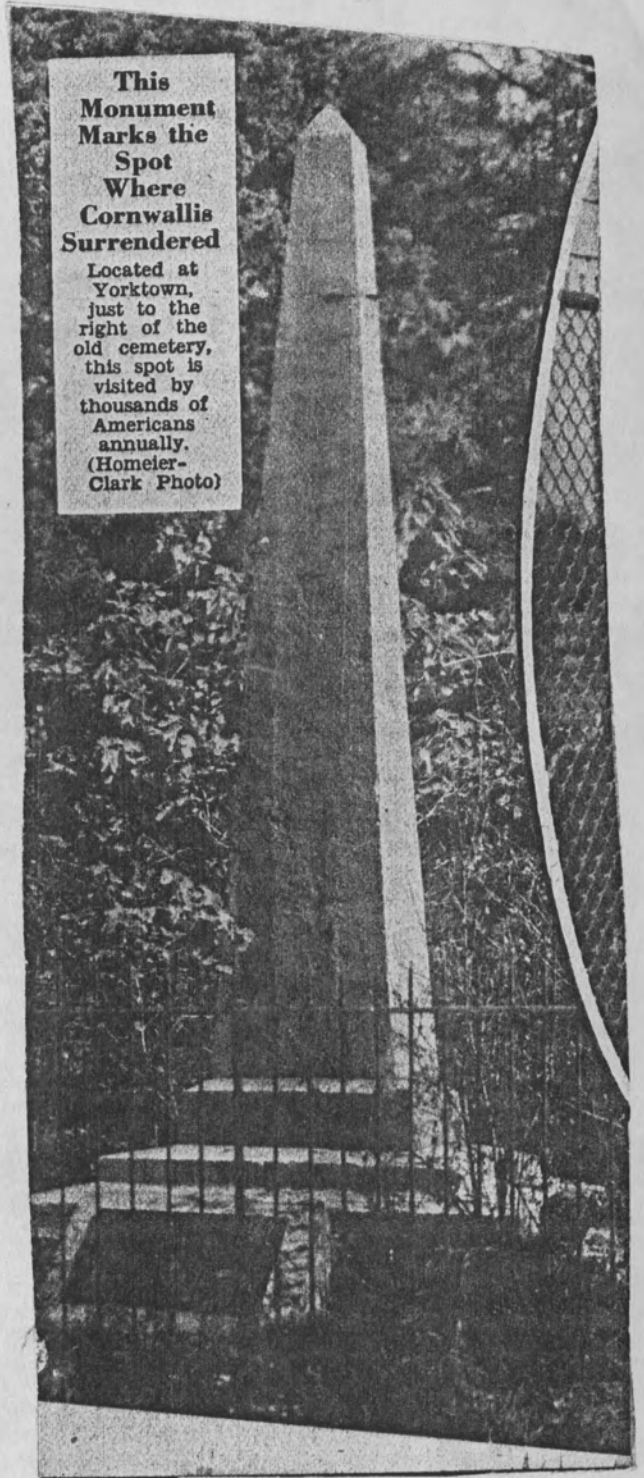
1926

One of the new large ferries which replaced the little CORNWALLIS that carried 4 cars. Gloucester Point in distance.

long gone!  
broken up and dumped  
in the woods!

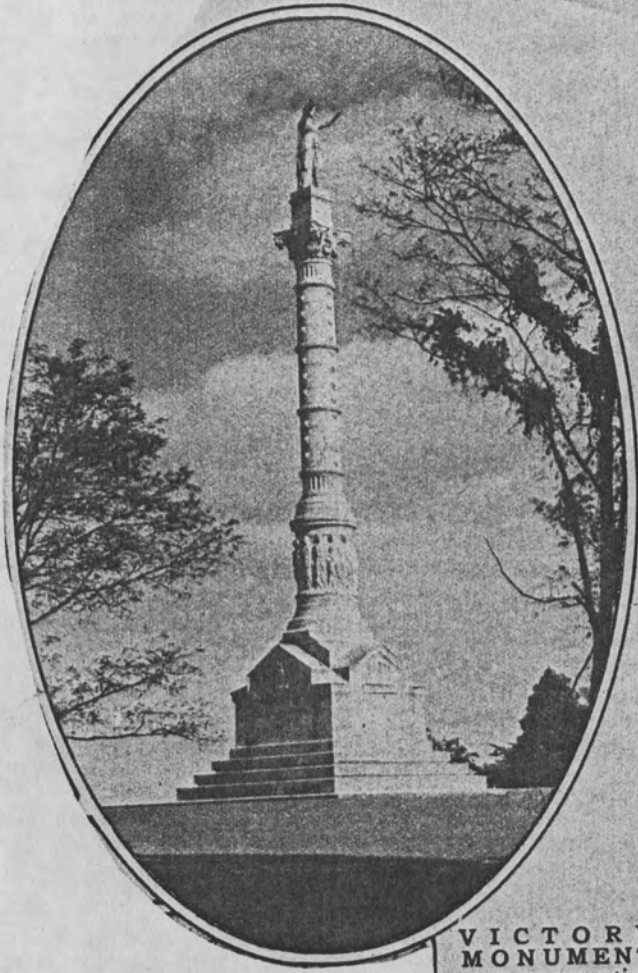
**This  
Monument  
Marks the  
Spot  
Where  
Cornwallis  
Surrendered**

Located at  
Yorktown,  
just to the  
right of the  
old cemetery,  
this spot is  
visited by  
thousands of  
Americans  
annually.  
(Homeier-  
Clark Photo)



THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE

1936



VICTORY  
MONUMENT  
commemorating  
the victory of the  
American and  
French armies at  
Yorktown in 1781.

National Park Service  
Photo

Note the arms of "Miss Liberty"  
(not the present one - instead, this is  
the original, prior to damage by  
lightning.)

# FIRST YORK PARISH SITE IN 'OLD FIELDS'

(Williamsburg Bureau)

YORKTOWN, Va., March 22.—Senator Swanson recently introduced in the Senate a bill asking Congress to authorize the Secretary of the Navy to convey to the Comte de Grasse chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Yorktown, Virginia, the site of the first church of York Parish. This church was situated in the "old fields" near Wormley's Creek, on York Plantation, now known as Temple Farm.

York Plantation was patented by Sir John Harvey in 1631 and the church, a wooden building, was certainly there in 1655, for Tyler says: "Williams Hawkins, on his death in 1655, left after his wife's death, 1500 pounds of tobacco for a silver flagon for this church and in 1686 Argah Blackstone, his grandson, left a silver wine bond inscribed with his name, to be purchased out of the sale of a hogshead of tobacco."

This old church was abandoned when the Episcopal church at Yorktown became the Parish church in 1700. The foundation of the old church is still visible, and within the enclosure is a flat slab, bearing a coat of arms, and the following inscription:

"Major William Gooch of this Parish Dyed October 29, 1685.

"Within this tomb there doth interred lie

No shape but substance true nobility;

Itself though young in yeares but twenty-nine,

Yet graced with vertues morall and divine;

The church from him did good participate;

In councill rare fit to adorn a state."

The Boy Scouts a few summers ago cleaned up around the foundation of this old church, and opened the road leading to it. They placed new posts around the old tombstone of Major William Gooch, and then made a thickly woven network of barbed wire to protect it. The slabs on the ground, which lessens the risk of breaking.

When the bill was first introduced by Senator Swanson there was some misunderstanding among some of the citizens of Yorktown, and doubt as to exactly what church was designated by him. Some thought it to be old Grace Episcopal church at Yorktown, but as is shown by a copy of his bill, the site of the First Parish church on Temple Farm is the one in question.

# TRUSTEES ELECTED IN YORKTOWN BILL

**Senator Stubbs Patron of a  
Measure Which Would Leave  
Choice of Trustees to People**

A bill was introduced yesterday in the Virginia Senate by Senator Stubbs providing for the election of five trustees for Yorktown, which comes the result of a mass meeting, held there recently when citizens registered vigorous protests against the present appointment of trustees.

Provision was made at the mass meeting for the signing of a petition requesting the legislature to provide for the election of trustees, and this petition, it is reported, was signed by approximately 50 voters. The committee to which the matter was entrusted then employed Allan D. Jones, of this city, to draft the bill.

The bill continues the present trustees in office until such time as their successors are elected and qualified, sets the second Tuesday of June, 1926 as the date for the first election, defines the limits of the town of York and says, who may vote, sets up election machinery, provides that the five persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be the trustees, defines their duties and requires the present trustees to make reports and render accounts of their transactions, monies received and the amount of taxes collected in pursuance of this act shall do likewise on the first of January and July of each year.

The text of the bill follows:

1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia, that an Act

entitled "An Act for the appointment of trustees for the town of York," approved March 16, 1818, be amended and re-enacted so as to read as follows:

Whereas, under the aforesaid Act and previous Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, trustees have been appointed for the town of York, and on occasions the trustees having died, the remaining trustees have appointed their successors, and

Whereas, the inhabitants of the town of York have petitioned the General Assembly that an act be passed providing for the election of trustees for the said town, and that the said trustees be required to make reports and render accounts of their transactions,

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia, that C. H. Sheld, W. P. Cooke, Sydney Smith, Halstead M. Clements and T. W. Crockett, the present trustees of the town of York are hereby continued as such trustees, with all the rights, powers and duties conferred on said trustees by Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia heretofore passed, not inconsistent with the general laws of the State, particularly the general laws of the State on the subject of the government of towns, until such time as their successors have been elected and qualified, as herein-after provided.

Sec. 2. On the second Tuesday in June 1926, and on the second Tuesday in June every two years thereafter, the successors of the trustees herein named shall be elected by the qualified voters of the town of York, in the manner and for the term provided by general law for the election of members of town councils.

Sec. 3. In the aforesaid elections all persons shall be entitled to vote who are qualified to vote in general elections in this State, residing in Nelson District, York County, Virginia, within the following described territory; beginning at the Junction of Smith's Creek and York River on the West side of Yorktown and extending along the low water mark

of the property fronting on York River and East to the East corner of the U. S. Government Yorktown Monument property. Thence along the Eastern boundary of said monument property extended to a junction with the York Hampton Road; thence along the said York-Hampton Road to its intersection with the Goosely road at the National Cemetery; thence in a straight line in a Northerly direction to what is commonly known as Magruder Spring at the head of one branch of the Marsh in back of Yorktown; thence following the meanderings of the stream of the Marsh to York River at the Point of Beginning.

Sec. 4. It shall be the duty of the Judge of the Circuit Court of York County, Virginia, to appoint three qualified voters of the said town of York to be judges in the said election, and two qualified voters to be clerks in the said election. By order entered by said Court, the Registrar of Nelson District, York County, Virginia shall be required to furnish to the said judges for use in said election a list of all persons living within the boundaries as set forth in Section 3 hereof; and by like order, the said Court shall require the Treasurer of the County of York to furnish to the said judges of election

a list of all persons residing in the aforesaid territory who have paid poll taxes for the years 1923 and 1924, but it shall not be necessary to furnish a list in the election to be held the second Tuesday in June 1926, showing payment of poll taxes for the year 1925, such payment not being a prerequisite to vote in this first election held hereafter. It shall be a prerequisite to voting that the person offering to vote shall have paid poll taxes assessed for the three years prior to the year of the election, such payment to be made at least six months prior to the election.

Sec. 5. The said judges and clerks of the election shall make out and certify to the said Circuit Court of York County a list of those five persons who received the highest number of votes in the said election, and the certificate of election of the said judges and clerks shall have the same force and effect as given by the general election laws of the State to certificates of election.

Sec. 6. The five persons receiving the highest number of votes in said election shall be the trustees for the town of York for the term of two years beginning July 1, 1926, and shall continue in office until their successors have been elected and qualified. Before July 1, 1926, the said trustees shall give bond for the faithful performance of their duties before the Clerk of the Circuit Court of York County, Virginia, with security approved by the said Clerk, the penalty of the said bond being in the sum of \$500.00, and in the same form and upon same condition as bond required by general law of town councilmen.

Sec. 7. It shall be the duty of the trustees now in office, on June 30, 1926, to make and file in the Circuit Court of York County, Virginia a report showing their transactions and that of their predecessors, wherein shall be shown what monies the said trustees have received, and what disposition has been made thereof, and what balance is in their hands as such, and of what property, real and personal, they may be seized

and possessed. It shall be the duty of the trustees elected in pursuance of this Act to make like reports on the 1st of January and July of each year to the Circuit Court of York County, Virginia.

Sec. 8. The Circuit Court of York County, Virginia shall fix the annual compensation of the said Trustees of the town of York who may be elected under the provisions of this Act, such order to be entered within sixty days from the 1st day of July, 1926.

Sec. 9. All elections held under this Act shall be governed by the general election laws of the State providing for the election of members of town councils, except as herein otherwise provided.

Sec. 10. The said Trustees if the town of York shall have all rights, powers and duties conferred on Trustees of towns either by the Act of the General Assembly passed November 1738, or the Act approved March 13, 1892, not inconsistent with the general law of the State, and shall exercise such powers and discharge such duties in accordance with the general law relating to the powers and duties of town councils.

Sec. 11. An emergency existing, this Act shall be in force from its passage.

# Penniman, Thriving Community in War,<sup>17</sup> Today Scattered Ruins Off Scenic Road

By DICK VELZ.

PENNIMAN, June 22.—Here, just off the scenic Colonial National Historical Parkway, lie the crumbling ruins of what was once a thriving city of more than 5,000 souls — Penniman, a World War ammunition plant, and now Virginia's "Ghost City."

Today a herd of peaceful cows graze over the fields once covered with fifty miles of railroad; wild flowers turn tender heads from broken vats where T N T once took form, and only hordes of mosquitoes people the hundreds of acres near the wide York.

Just after you reach the present end of the three-strip Federal highway connecting Williamsburg with Yorktown, six miles outside of Williamsburg's city limits, there's a dirt road which turns off to the left and swings between two high mounds to that which was Penniman.

## Was Complete City.

No longer can you mail a letter at Penniman postoffice—for that institution, once handling from 12,000 to 14,000 letters and from seventy-five to 100 sacks of parcels daily, is just one of the memories. Money orders here sometimes amounted to \$7,000, and it was a poor day when stamp sales dropped below \$200.

Its fire department, once housed in a spacious building, and boasting "one truck carrying 1,200 feet of 2½-inch hose, one 24-foot extension ladder, and other implements carried on modern apparatus," to say nothing of a Ford chemical truck, and a chief's car, answers no more alarms—and you'll have to dig deep to find one of the fire-alarm boxes.

Neither will your call for help receive aid from one of the nine police officers who once walked their beats on Penniman's boarded sidewalks, for their last inspection

has been held, and they're scattered—where, no one knows.

Practically everyone in Williamsburg and Yorktown either worked at Penniman, at the du Pont plant, for the government, or knew someone who did. Their memories are a bit hazy, for twenty years is a long time, but bit by bit as we talked to them the story of those days at Penniman came back.

## Houses in Williamsburg.

On North Henry Street in Williamsburg stand three of the seventeen houses moved there from Penniman following the dismantling of the camp; fifty-one houses were moved to Norfolk; for some time the College of William and Mary used some of the structures for temporary dormitories, classrooms and dining-rooms. Another of the houses is to be found on South England Street, and yet another on Scotland.

E. T. Davis, Williamsburg contractor, took up twenty-five miles of the extensive Penniman Railroad system years ago and moved some of the houses. The railway system included a main line which joined with the Chesapeake & Ohio about a mile below Williamsburg, and a branch system which reached practically every building on the reservation.

At the height of the camp's career, six trains were operated each day to and from Williamsburg, where a number of workers made their homes. Among others in Williamsburg who moved some of the houses was John Warburton, now a City Councilman.

## Sanitation Good.

When plans for the Penniman camp were drawn up, residents hereabouts told du Pont and government authorities that mosquitoes would prove too great an obstacle to overcome. But the sanitation staff took pride in their work, and the story goes that the mosquitoes

were as scarce at Penniman "as Huns in Washington."

The sanitation staff of seven, aided by the hospital group of twenty-four, used much the same system as tried in the building of the Panama Canal. This took into consideration the known fact that the malaria-bearing type of mosquito rarely travels more than half a mile from its breeding place. Extensive systems of ditches were dug, oil treatment systems installed and breeding checked in all of the surrounding swamps by applications of oil at frequent intervals.

Penniman even had a beauty parlor, although it was called a "shampoo room," conducted by a Miss Adamson and Miss Tighe, both of "the Francis Fox Institute, of New York City," and "four assistants."

The drug store, so they tell us, was the favorite evening "hang-out," and where many a camp romance began. It was one of the last of the units to be dismantled.

## Central Heating Plant.

A central heating plant, combined with a power system, served the community, and even today a few of the poles which once carried electricity, and some of the rusted pipes, may be seen half buried in the long grass.

High above today's ruins stands the water tower, rusted and frowning with age, its wooden-covered discharge pipe covered with a dead moss easily seen from the Yorktown Road. Gone are many of the pipe lines which served the camp, but here and there, broken and useless, are some of the fire hydrants.

Building a house at Penniman was a two-day job, if we are to believe an article to that effect in the "Projectile." The residential area was located some distance from the main plant, bordering on one of the creeks which flows into the York.

*The Richmond News Leader, Wednesday, June 22, 1938*

**RUINS OF WORLD WAR TOWN**—Little is left standing today at Penniman, community near Williamsburg, where 5,000 lived during the World War era and turned out ammunition for the guns in France. Through the doors of one of the crumbling buildings (just above) can be seen two other ruins, first in the beginning of a mile-long row of similar structures. Massive walls used in the buildings is noticeable. The photo at the left shows the type of houses which stood in the residential section of Penniman, as indicated in a print belonging to Drewry Jones, of Williamsburg. Many of these houses were moved to Norfolk, Newport News, Williamsburg, and other near-by towns. The photo at the right shows one of the white, ghost-like shell-loading plants, with a farmhouse and a water tower in the background—all that is left today on the site of the development. [Photos by Jack Garrett.]

*Cheatham Annex is built on the spot now.*

*Moved  
War To*

## J. S. de Neufville Closes Store After 58 Years In Business

Closed Sign On Only General Merchandise Store in Yorktown. Marks End of Long Career in Business.

After 58 years of business in Yorktown, Virginia, J. S. de Neufville, last of the old-line country merchants, has closed his shop.

Forced by the circumstances of lack of labor, materials, and the high prices of 1946, Mr. de Neufville has put a CLOSED sign on his General Merchandise Store, which was the only store of its kind in the town where you could buy such necessities as spool cotton, twine, cough syrup, hard candies, farm supplies, licorice, groceries paints and all the other essentials that make up the stock of the old-fashioned country store.

Yorktown was a small but thriving town, in 1889, when Mr. de Neufville first put up his sign proclaiming that J. S. DE NEUFVILLE sold GENERAL MERCHANDISES with QUALITY, PRICE, and SERVICE, over his rented store on Main Street, close by the old Swan Tavern, and not far from the old Custom's House. He was 18 years old at the time. Business went well for the young merchant and thirteen years later in 1902, he built his present stand right next door, at the same time erecting a home for himself at the side and rear of the new establishment.

In the early days, de Neufville purchased his supplies from Baltimore, having them shipped by boat. Shipments came in on two side-wheelers operated by the Baltimore Steamboat Line, which had been started during the Civil War. Three times a week the HAVANA and LOUISE brought new supplies and the latest in fashions and farm equipment for the General Merchant. Later his shipments came in larger and more up-to-date ships as the company's trade developed. In more modern times, although Mr. de Neufville still procured much merchandise by the water route, shipments also reached him by fast moving trucks over the new highways from nearby points.

*Transportation  
in York —  
rural, but not  
isolated!*

The last of his kind of merchant in Yorktown, Mr. de Neufville believes he is also the last man living in the town who worked on the erection of the Victory Monument there. Congress had passed a resolution on October 29, 1781, authorizing the erection of a monument at Yorktown in commemoration of the recent victory. Almost 100 years later, Congress appointed a committee, comprised of one member of each House from each of the thirteen original states, to select the site and to arrange for a fitting celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Surrender of the British, and the final and complete victory of the war. Incidentally, the site finally chosen on Main Street, overlooking the broad York River, is said to have once belonged to the family of Nathaniel Bacon, who staged the famous "Bacon's Rebellion" at Jamestown in 1676 against the tyrannical actions of the British Crown.

As a lad of 15, de Neufville helped to lay the foundations of this Victory Monument "... erected to commemorate the victory by which the independence of the United States of America was achieved ...", which is inscribed on the monument itself. Later, working the crab-crank of the huge derrick used on the job, he assisted in pulling the figure of the Goddess of Liberty in place at the pinnacle. While working on the

monument, the boy watched a workman, high atop the shaft, suddenly plunge the 100 feet to the ground. Rescuers rushed to his aid, but found the worker picking himself up, with only his arm broken in two places. He had been saved by the slaffolding, which had broken his fall. The same workman was soon back on the job and aided in the completion of the monument.

The lad of 15, many years later, saw the head of the Goddess of Liberty knocked off by a terrific electrical storm which caused much damage in and around Yorktown. He says plans are underway to put a new head on Liberty and he hopes to watch this event also.

Mr. de Neufville was there to attend the Centennial celebration in 1881, and in October, 1931, he also attended the Sesquicentennial anniversary, when many thousands of people from all over America; French delegations in their fine modern battle cruisers, and many people from other foreign lands, poured into the town, crowding the highways and byways to witness this spectacular and historic event.

Mr. de Neufville recalls two very bad storms in Yorktown in his memory. Once in 1891 he witnessed a terrific tidal wave which hit the town with a roar, flooding and washing away many buildings. He thinks, however, that this storm was not really as bad as the tidal wave of 1933, when nearly all the waterfront was destroyed or washed away. His own General Store, however, was safe from the lashings of the wind and water, as it stood on high ground on the street above the water front. Much property damage was done at this time, he recalls, and many people were homeless. The Army was called in to preserve martial law to prevent looting and to protect property and possessions of the townspeople.

Mr. de Neufville is a native of Yorktown, having been born there in 1870, just 15 years after the close of the Civil War. His father was Samuel de Neufville of Williamsburg, who settled in Yorktown, operating a small business there until he died at the early age of 39. His grandfather, John Augustine de Neufville, Jr., was a teacher of French in Williamsburg. The family had its beginning in Virginia when his great grandfather, John Augustine de Neufville, came to this country from France as a member of General Lafayette's staff, serving during the Revolutionary War in the fighting at Yorktown. After the war John Augustine de Neufville remained in Williamsburg.

J. S. de Neufville married Miss Carrie Winder of Hampton in 1896, and on the 20th of May, 1946, the couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They have two daughters, Marie, who is Mrs. Edwin Glaser of the Naval Mine Depot at Yorktown, and Lucy, who is Mrs. Vernon Jennings of Hilton Village, Virginia. The Golden Wedding Anniversary was quietly spent, says Mr. de Neufville, only his children and their families being present, for he prefers a quiet life. He was always the country merchant and although many topics on political, economic, and other varied subjects, were argued and thrashed out around the warm stove of a cold winter's night, he prefers to be a good listener. He was never a joiner of committees or clubs, and took no active part in the politics of the town. He does, however, have the distinction of being on the Board

*(over)*

of Directors of the important Peninsula Bank and Trust Company in Williamsburg, and he hopes, now that he will no longer have to tend his shop, to attend more of the meetings. He hopes, too, to rest and take things easy. He is straight and upright for all of his 76 years, and moves with a quick firm step. He is going to enjoy his pleasant, quiet yard and watch the world go by from his front porch beside his once busy General Merchandise Store.

Yorktown will sadly miss this fine country store, however, and will look with disappointment at the sign reading CLOSED, for there is now no such place in town where one can buy a spool of cotton, or a bit of calico, or those leathery licorice bars, to say nothing of that tonic for Aunt Jennie's rheumatism Uncle Tom always bought there.

# History Of Seaford Replete With Instances Of American Folklore

The early history of Crab Neck (now known as Seaford) is involved in a cloud of uncertainty, but it is certain that it lay within the boundaries of Charles Parish.

Quoting from the book, *Charles Parish, York County, Virginia, History and Registers*, "The areas of the parish (or parishes) for which we have these registers, is of the section of York County, Virginia, lying on Chesapeake Bay and York River, between Elizabeth City County and Yorktown, but it seems not embracing all that water frontage.

Perhaps we can endeavor to be a little more definite and be approximately correct. The parish, then it seems, embraced the region between Back Creek and Poquoson River." This description would embrace the Bay frontage of the sections now known as Crab Neck and Fish Neck.

The only uncertainty that arises is as to whether the area was always, during the periods covered by the registers, known as Charles Parish, or whether for a time it was embraced in an older parish. The parish history of this section in the early years of the colony is especially obscure.

Soon after the settlement of the country, when Indians abounded and it was dangerous to go far to worship, every little plantation or settlement in that region was made a parish. A list of parishes in Virginia, June 30, 1680, does not mention Charles Parish, but it existed as one of the parishes in July 8, 1702.

## PARISHES CONSOLIDATE

By an act of September, 1696, small parishes, not able to support a minister, might by action of their respective vestries, apply to the Governor to be allowed to unite and consolidate. Pursuant to this act, the vestries of "Parishes of York and Hampton" Feb. 5, 1706-07 petitioned the Governor and Council to order "that said parishes may be united and consolidated into one parish and known by the name of Yorkhampton."

Records establish a parish in 1645 in York County named New Poquoson, a writer in William and Mary Quarterly, lists "New Poquoson, afterward Charles Parish, be-

tween Back Creek and Poquoson River" in 1657.

This article, it will be observed, states that New Poquoson parish was later Charles River Parish (Charles Parish). In 1642-43 one of the parishes was New Poquoson parish, that about 1680 the name was changed to New Townson parish and that prior to July 8, 1702, the name was changed to Charles Parish and so remained to the end of the time covered by the registers herewith presented.

Charles Parish became involved in a bitter and long drawn out controversy over their first minister, the Rev. James Sclater. There is ground for belief the controversy was between those who supported and those who opposed the Rev. Mr. Sclater, and the question of the power and authority of the colonial officials to keep a minister in the office of rector of a parish against the will and wishes of the vestry, and to tax the inhabitants for his support, whether they wished his services or not was involved in the case.

A vestry was legally constituted by several council actions and the group immediately shut the church doors against the Rev. Mr. Sclater. The minister appealed to the Governor who ordered a hearing and the court entered the order that the church wardens and vestry "do not presume to shut the church doors against said minister" although the vestry refused to obey the order and "shut the church doors and lock up the reading desk and by other

unwarrantable means riotously hindered the minister," the said Rev. Mr. Sclater finally won and continued as minister of the parish for 14 more years, until his death in 1723.

## NATIVE OF YORK

The Rev. Samuel Shield, minister of the parish 1791-1793 was the only York County native to serve the parish. He was educated at William and Mary College, where he was a medalist in 1769 and received the King Bountly, Jan. 18, 1775. He was president of the convention of the clergy in 1784 and wrote the petition of that year of the Church of the Legislature. In 1786 and 1790 he was supported by a minority for the office of Bishop. He died in 1793.

A cloud falls on the history of Charles Parish from this date, but records show the first known church in Crab Neck proper, was built in 1822-23. A deed from the members of the Stroud family to trustees on which to build a "place of worship" for members of the Methodist Church in the United States was recorded, Dec. 20, 1822, at the York County Clerks office.

During the Civil War, the union soldiers tore the church down, leaving only the foundation and sills and built a hospital in Yorktown with the lumber. It was rebuilt in 1866 with lumber hauled in from Old Point Comfort by steer carts. The church was remodeled in 1900 and wings added to it in 1919.

The Civil War touched the Crab Neck settlement lightly. The Con-



This was the first school house, after the old log school, built in Seaford before 1885.

federate Southern Army threw a small fort up near the center of the community, but it was abandoned. They retreated when the Yankees landed at Ships Point in Dare and Belvins Point, now known as Cheadles Farm, but some of the older residents remember the old log road through Crab Neck that was built to transport their supplies to Yorktown. A few Yankee soldiers returned and settled in Seaford.

No one knows definitely the names of the first land owners of Crab Neck, but it is believed that an Englishman by the name of Claxton owned the whole area through a British Land Grant, in the 17th century.

In researching the records a marriage bond was found issued to Jessie Hopkins, spinster, and Zeporah Crockett stating that they were "held and firmly bound to James P. Preston, Esquire, Governor or Chief Magistrate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, in the just and full sum of one hundred and fifty dollars to be paid to the said Governor and his successors to which payment will and truly to be made, we bind ourselves jointly and severally our joint and several heirs, Executors and Administrators firmly by their presents sealed with our seals and dated this fourth day of April, 1817." It is presumed that the said Jessie Hopkins and John A. Rogers married for there is no record that they paid the one hundred and fifty dollar bond.

#### RECORDS LOST IN FIRE

Due to the fact that many valuable old records were destroyed by fire, there are few authentic records left in Seaford and the history of Seaford becomes much more vague as it is handed down through stories, generation after generation. It is widely known that the old familiar names of Crockett, Ironmonger, Hansford,

Hopkins, Chisman, Graves, Parker, Davis, Stroud, Hornsby, Dawson, Curtis, Foster and others were familiar in the area before the Civil War. There were approximately 30 families living there at the time of the war, but the exact date and names of the first settlers is undetermined.

The origin of the name of Crab Neck that was established around 1822 carries an amusing though unauthenticated story. A name must be had for the community, but no one could think of a proper one. One day a large crab was discovered crawling on the neck between Back Creek and Chisman Creek. That settled the question. It was Crab Neck from then until about 1910 when some of the more civic minded citizens, hearing of the name of Seaford, Delaware, decided the name of Seaford was most fitting for a community almost surrounded by water. So Seaford it became.

Several farms were cultivated in the early days, but many men "followed the water," building a fish, clam and oyster business that is today the chief industry of Seaford. Older residents who are in their late seventies and eighties remember that homes, schools and stores were built of logs, although it is known that James Ironmonger in the early part of the 19th century purchased a sixteen room house believed to have been built in the early eighteenth century, but by whom is unknown.

The first post office is known to have been established around 1889-90. In searching the history of Seaford, the question arises, who was first postmaster? Some believe F. F. Crockett to be the first and others say W. H. Hornsby. However, it is known that B. F. Crockett has a post office "Calima" in 1903 in his store near public landing and it is believed another

one "Sea Bright," at another time. The first mail carrier was James Martin who brought the mail in by horseback from Yorktown. Information and dates of post offices are determined from letters received by Sadie C. Teagle.

#### FIRST SCHOOL

Isaac Wheeler conducted the first school, a private one, in Seaford. From there he became the earliest public school teacher, when the log school was built. Other teachers to follow him were Carbon Sauter and Albert Huggins. A two-room school house on land granted by the Stroud family was later built where the new Zion Church stands.

The "largest blacksmith shop in the United States with no top on it" was in Seaford and was owned by Andrew Swartz. It stood under a cherry tree and when the weather was inclement, business did not go on as usual. The blacksmith was located where the old school house is now situated.

In the days when doctors traveled by horseback or buggy all over the county to treat the ill, they also or about served as dentists by pulling teeth. In 1897, a young dentist by the name of Will Hamilton spent his summer vacations from dental school in Seaford, where he filled and pulled teeth and made false teeth with a life guarantee.

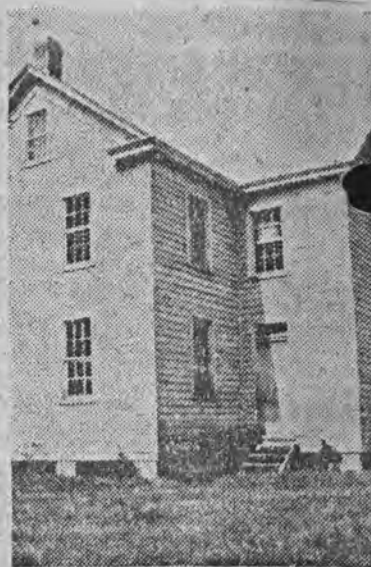
Another traveling business man, a photographer by the name of Buck (first name unknown) spent some time in Seaford taking family pictures and pictures of homes that have, many of them, been destroyed by fire. Another business man, well remembered by many, was Alex Wright, a Negro, who owned a shoe repair shop.

In the steer cart days, the women piled into the steer carts and (went shopping) for dry goods at "old Mr. Tom Crockett's" store, in Cockle Town (now Grafton, Virginia), but in later years, some 55 years ago, C. J. Slaight's General Merchandise store in Seaford, drew the women by buggy and boat from the areas of Yorktown, Grafton and Pocomoke, to his ladies wear department that was supervised by Mrs. Slaight. Her millinery shop, where hats were made, was the only millinery shop in the whole area. The Hornsby name has been in the mercantile business in seaford 75 years.

#### FIRST PACKET BOAT

G. D. Ironmonger was the owner of one of the first packet boats, a large canoe. He took orders from the Seaford merchants and freighted their merchandise from Norfolk. From around 1840 to 1861 practically all food and merchandise was freighted from Norfolk by Capt. S. D. Ironmonger, Thomas Dawson, Cary Crockett and Montgomery. However most of the boats were commandeered by the northern troops. In 1867 B. T. Riggins built the first log "bugeye" boat and named her the B. T. Riggins.

In 1890 G. D. Ironmonger was known to operate the first oyster shucking house located on Back Creek. With the advent of the Steamboat clams and oysters were



This is the third school house erected in Seaford.

shipped north. According to belief, the first pound net for fishing in Virginia was set in Seaford. The net was made by Cornelius E. Teagle and was owned by five men of the area. From these early beginnings in the seafood industry the work has been carried on until Seaford, now has two large fish packing houses, two large

crab packing houses and one oyster shucking house.

From the turn of the twentieth century, until the first World War the quiet little village of Seaford slowly changed with the passing of time. A two room school replaced the log school, well remembered school teachers, greatly handicapped in teaching methods, struggled with pupils through their book and with primitive heating systems. There were no grades in the early days. The children began with new books each semester and when the semester was ended, the books had been completed and the next semester began with new books again. School buildings became larger, and more teachers were added. A few years ago, the last Seaford school was abandoned and pupils transferred to the Yorktown School, where a school bus transports them daily.

#### GO TO WAR

World War One drew many young men from the community and a few of them did not return.

Horseless carriages replaced the steer carts and horse and buggies and in looking through the records we find that Woman's Suffrage touched Seaford, Sept. 2, 1921, when E. M. Crockett, housekeeper, became the first woman to register. Aug. 3, 1926, a petition "establish an election district known as Seaford Election District in Grafton Magisterial District

Continued On Page 8; Col. 6

*was bought by Baker Lee Hanaford. He reared his family there.*

*It burned after being vacated.*



Considered one of the oldest houses in the Seaford area. Owned by C. W. Crockett. Was built in the 1700s.

(Editor's Note—The history of Seaford as herewith published was compiled by interested, but "amateur" historians of the Woman's Club of Seaford. How authentic the facts and date of this article are, is not known, as they were written from the memory of the older residents, stories handed down from generation to generation. Any facts names or dates that have been omitted are purely an oversight and a lack of records in the community. The committee that compiled the article are Mrs. Elmo Simpson, Mrs. W. W. Crockett, Mrs. Alvin Moreland and Mrs. H. M. Dickinson. The committee wishes to thank, C. E. Crockett, Mr. and Mrs. Delancy Graves, Mrs. Clifton Hogge, Mrs. O. P. Montgomery, Mrs. H. C. DeAlba, Dr. and Mrs. L. O. Powell, C. S. Teagle, Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Mills, Mrs. Walker Whitehead, Mrs. M. L. Eure, Mrs. G. E. Morse and Horace Ashton for their invaluable assistance and the use of their old pictures.)



This group is the first Woman's Christian Society of the Methodist Church in Seaford.

trict York County," was presented at Circuit Court, to establish a voting place therein. More than half of the qualified voters in Grafton election district reside in the territory sought in this petition to be embraced in Seaford Election District. As voters had to traverse bad roads for the distance of almost five miles, distance from Seaford to Grafton to cast votes, there being no other voting district.

By 1929-30 electricity had snaked its way into many of the homes replacing oil and welsbach burner gas lamps. By 1929 soft roads were being replaced by winding hard surface roads.

The Depression years added little to Seaford, but it gradually began to thrive. "City folks" began to recognize the beauty of sites along the waterfront and many summer homes have been built.

Water for home use remains a problem. Shallow wells and rain water cisterns have been in use for many, many years. Of late years deep wells have been driven, but the water is not satisfactory. The Women's Club of Seaford is now making every effort to obtain city water for Seaford.

#### NEW MODERN CHURCH

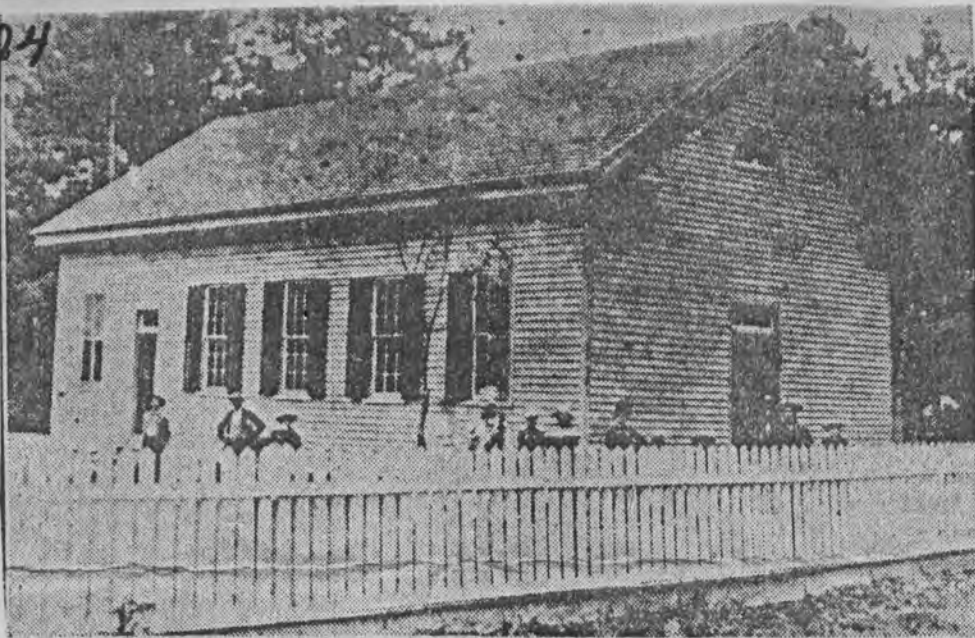
The old Zion Methodist Church has been replaced by a beautiful new modern structure of brick. The cornerstone was laid Aug. 23, 1949, and first services were held in it May 20, 1951. At that time the membership was 450.

Building has been going on apace in Seaford, one finds beautiful, well kept homes throughout the community. There are five country stores now, that still carry the needs of the community, but specialize in groceries. The famous old Slight Store is still operated by a daughter, Mrs. Clifton Hogge, but it has lost its old hustle and bustle. Seaford now also boasts a confectionery store and beauty parlor. Other industries are two fish houses, two crab houses, one oyster shucking house and an oil industry.

The population has grown from about 30 families, after the War Between the States, to more than a thousand. Many of whom are still in the fishing industry. A few small farms are still under cultivation, but the majority of the men work at nearby government installations and the shipyard at Newport News. There are many activities for the women folks. The Woman's Society for Christian Service and other church activities and an energetic Woman's Club.

Seaford is a thriving, peaceful community that has shown steady progress from its early days.

*Thelma Montgomery Hanaford & her sister are sitting on the steps.*



This is the second Zion Methodist Church building, built in 1866. The first quarterly conference was held at Tabernacle Church March 16, 1866. New business that day was "Measures toward building a church for the Zion congregation." A committee of five was appointed from Zion to build a church at Crab Neck. The second quarterly conference was held at Providence Church, the third at Tabernacle Church and the fourth at Zion Church Nov. 11, 1866. This proves the building date. Wings were added in 1900.



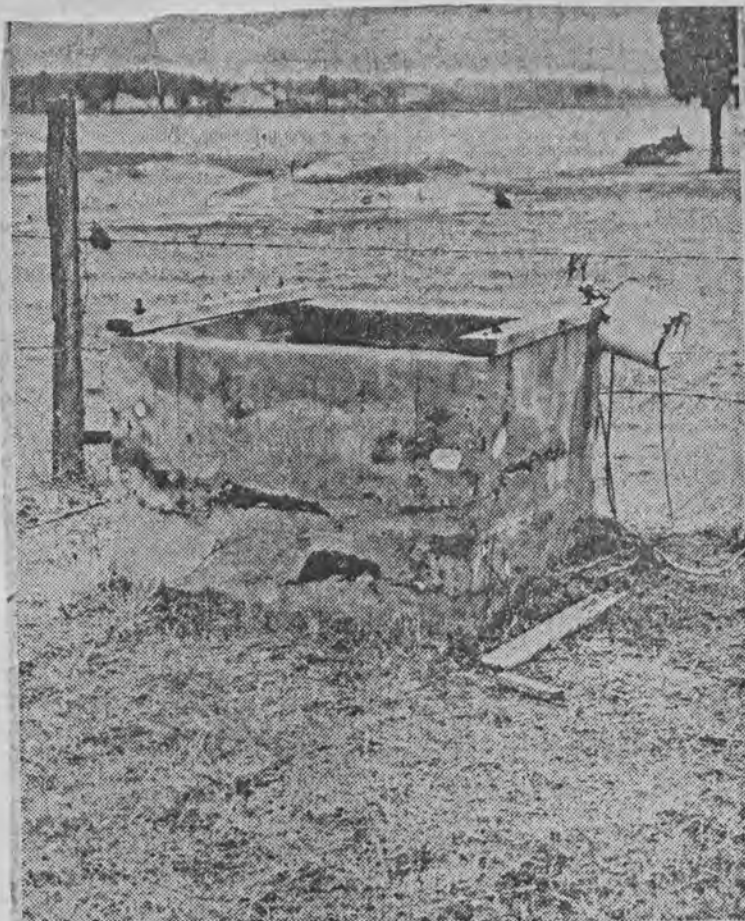
The home of J. F. Crockett. What now appears as a wing was the original section built in the early 1700s.

*S. F. DeAlbe lived there. It too, burned after being vacated. At end of Crockett Road in Seaford, facing Chismon's Creek.*

Chisman's  
Creek

7

25

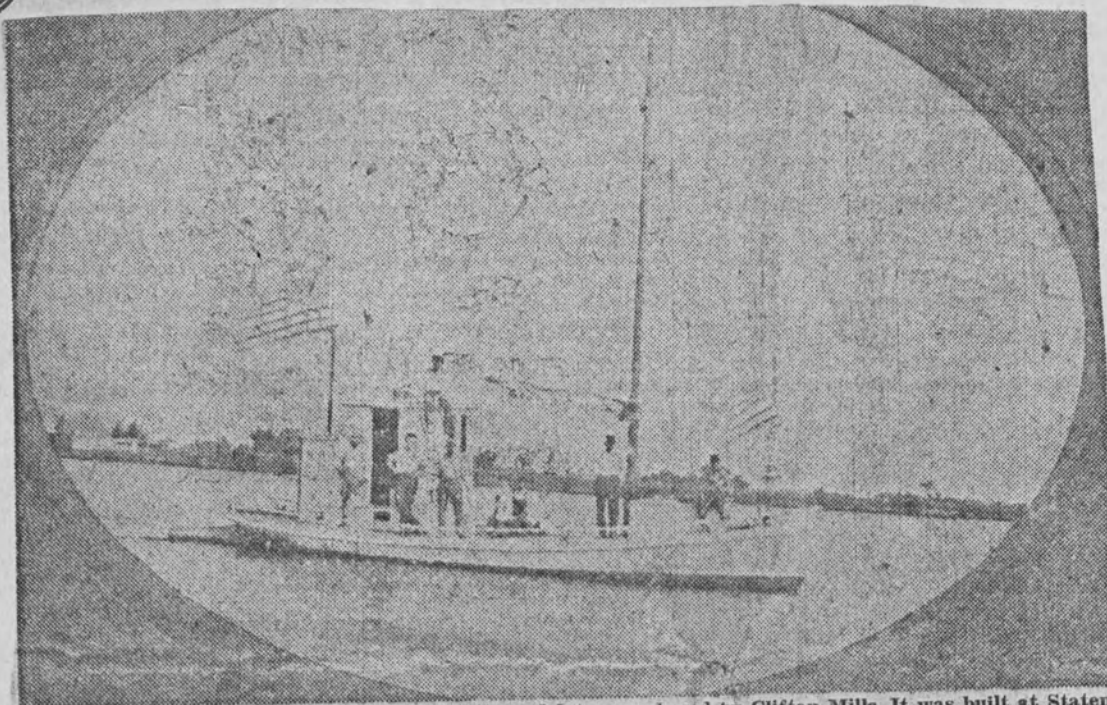


This well is considered the "oldest thing" in Seaford. It was dug early in the 1700s. It is on the Joseph Whiddington Crockett property.



Inside of the old C. J. Slight General Merchandise Store. Part of the store was a millinery shop and ladies ready to wear. Women traveled by boat and horse and buggy from Yorktown, Poquoson and Grafton to have their hats made by the milliners. The picture was taken approximately ~~30~~ 30 years ago and shows Mr. and Mrs. Slight, their son, James, and daughter and a customer, Mrs. Walker Whitehead.

(1920's)



Private yacht Sensation owned by Meyer family and later purchased by Clifton Mills. It was built at Staten Island, N. Y.

# Three Centuries Of York <sup>17</sup>

## Records Saved By Little Known Deed

NEWPORT NEWS-HAMPTON-WARWICK, VIRGINIA,

SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 13, 1955

By DONALD S. KNIGHT

*.... and I do solemnly swear .... that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon me as clerk of courts according to the best of my ability .... —(From the oath of office).*

McClellan's coming!

Along tree-lined Main St., down the hill to the river and along the waterfront to the tobacco wharf, Yorktown residents of Spring, 1862, heard the cry.

Clerk of Courts Bolivar Sheild, working in his cramped office at the corner of Main and Ballard Streets, heard the shouts too, but they came as no great surprise.

For two days he had watched Magruder's riflemen and sword-wielding horsemen muster before the courthouse, draw extra rations, and then, during the early dawn, begin the evacuation of Yorktown.

Their gray ranks moved along the Williamsburg road and Yorktown, threatened by encirclement for weeks, was to remain without a defending soldier for nearly a day and night before the Federals, encamped above Fort Grafton and beside batteries along the banks of Wormley Creek, would hear of the maneuver.

The so-called seige, during which one enemy cannon ball had found its mark on the town's only pier, was over.

Sheild was among the first

to learn that the revised battle plan included no pitched street defense for Yorktown, no last stand around the reactivated Revolutionary redoubts; and it was then that he had devised his daring plan to save the York County records.

### NO PART OF GAIN

The clerk was determined that his court books, containing the record of events in York for more than two centuries, would not be a part of the enemy's gain in capturing Yorktown.

But time was running out and a Yankee scouting party had been sighted on the Yorktown highway. Before another sunrise, enemy gunboats, patrolling at a safe distance in the Chesapeake, would steam into the mouth of the York.

As soon as the books could be loaded on the wagon Sheild and his helpers set off for the river. The wagon nearly wheeled out of control as it bounced down the dusty road, barely passing a burdened ammunition carrier and a team of horses that struggled up the hill.

The carrier's driver, with whip held high, cursed aloud and served notice that he did not in-

tend to be the last of the town's straggling garrison to travel the Williamsburg road on that morning of retreat.

Sheild, arriving at the waterfront, found it deserted and his sloop ready at the river's edge.

Again the books were moved. Then with the clerk at the helm, the craft was pushed into the York—with its bow pointed toward West Point, 30 miles up stream.

### OFFICIAL RECOGNITION

It was many years later before there was any official acknowledgement of Sheild's deeds. During the restoration of Williamsburg John D. Rockefeller financed the restoration of one of the older court record books in gratitude for the service the time-worn volumes had been in his program.

Full cognizance, however, came 75 years after that escape on the York—during a ceremony sponsored by the Association for Preservation of Virginia Antiquities at Yorktown on July 1, 1936.

About 30 descendants of Sheild were on hand to watch two of his grandsons unveil a plaque in the clerk's honor and several speakers lauded the far-reaching effects of his deed and proclaimed that not only the county, but the country, was indebted to him.

Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin of Bruton Parish, for example, mentioned the invaluable service rendered by the records in the

restoration at Williamsburg and Bingham Duncan, government historian, spoke on behalf of the National Park Service and told how pictures of life in Colonial York had been created from items in the old volumes.

The speakers also related how Sheild, after one night at West Point, learned that General Franklin—after going ashore at Yorktown just long enough to receive McClellan's orders—had moved by transport to the Pamunkey River.

### WEST POINT CUT OFF

And he also heard the surprising news that these troops, following one skirmish with Confederates, had struck west to the Richmond highway, cutting off West Point from the capital.

Blocked in his plan to seek a safe hiding place for the books in Richmond he hurriedly devised a new plan and then turned his sloop towards the Mattaponi River on the east.

Sheild failed to enter a written record of his own adventures when he returned to Yorktown but it is known that after reaching the York tributary he navigated to the landing of a river plantation, probably that of some acquaintance.

(over)

Records &  
Courthouse

(a)

He did not return to Yorktown until the sloop had been emptied of its precious cargo and the books safely hidden in the ice-house on that plantation.

Later, on the night of Dec. 13, 1863, Yorktown residents and garrisoned Federal troops were jolted from their beds by an ear-splitting blast that rocked Main St. The explosion sent a sheet of white flame into the night sky, stripping trees of their branches and demolishing historic Swan Tavern on the opposite corner.

No evidence was ever produced to show how heavy stockpiles of small arms ammunition in the courthouse came to explode that night. But it was a tribute to Sheild that no court records were in Yorktown when the clerk's tiny office was reduced to a pile of rubble in the blast.

#### WAS NOT ALONE

Sheild, however, was not alone as a clerk of courts who placed the safety of his books first in the line of duty.

History, sweeping in a never ending current around the community for two centuries and nearly always directing a destructive finger of seige, fire and explosion towards the courthouse, reveals that there were other dark days for the clerks.

These public servants, their names seen today as illegible sorawls on their own records, have managed to be just one step ahead of those many dangers.

Most often the clerk of courts was quartered in a separate structure on the courthouse property, designated as Lot 24 in county land books, and in most cases these tiny buildings offered only minimum protection against the threat of war or lesser danger.

Special reports on file in the

National Park Service library at Yorktown reveal that the first Colonial clerks for the county conducted business from their homes.

It wasn't until 1707 that the county magistrates contracted with a William Buckner to build an office—at a cost of 6,000 pounds of tobacco.

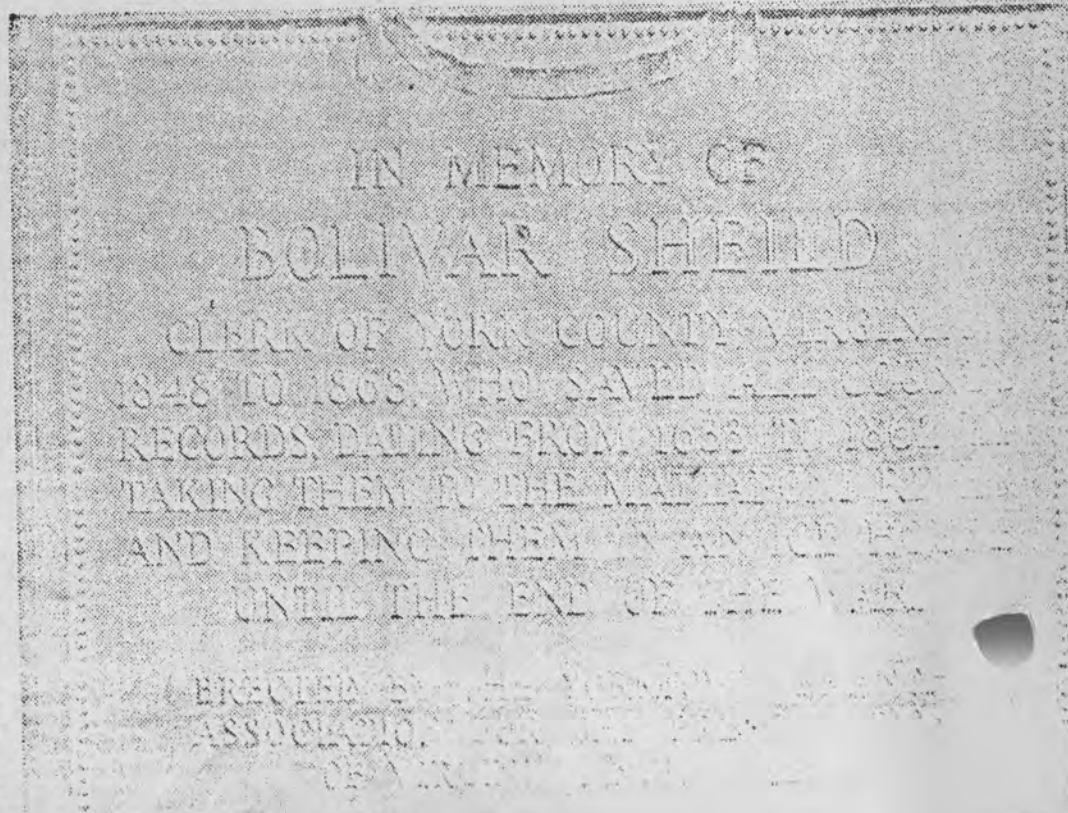
By this date the first of five York courthouses, a frame, one-story building, had been erected at the corner of what is now Main and Ballard Streets. Buckner's contract specified that the clerk's new headquarters adjoin the porch of this building.

#### STANDING IN 1730

It was 16-foot square, construct of feather-edged planking and records indicate it was still standing by 1730 when the condition of the main courthouse created a demand for a new and larger meeting place for the county magistrates.

The second courthouse project was undertaken in 1733 but no new clerk's office was included in the plan. The last known reference to the original office was made in 1746 when a court order was entered by the clerk for repair to office windows.

Between 1746 and 1808, then, this office was abandoned and it is assumed the clerk moved his books, for the first time, into the



Between 1746 and 1808, then, this office was abandoned and it is assumed the clerk moved his books, for the first time, into the courthouse. Records of the larger building reveal it was spacious enough to accommodate the clerk in either wing.

During this period, too, the first evacuation to insure the safety of the county records was carried out by a Colonial clerk. In 1777, with the British erecting their fortifications around the town, they were carried to Richmond—probably by a water and land route.

It may have been his knowledge of this deed that prompted Sheild to devise a similar plan nearly 100 years later.

When Cornwallis' legions arrived for the crucial battle at Yorktown they chose the courthouse as a base of operations. Later, the French forces occupied the building.

#### BOOKS RETURNED

Such was the state of affairs on Lot 24 during this period that the clerk of court, his books returned from Richmond by court order, reported that the magistrates for the county attempted to hold court in the building but "a variety of disorder within and the disagreeable smell of the house deterred the gentlemen from going in . . ."

By 1808, however, conditions had apparently improved and on July 18 the clerk noted completion of a remodeling project and his entry indicated that a need for more space in the building for court sessions had forced him to remove his books once again to separate quarters.

On this day the court ordered the second clerk's office erected, this time at a cost of \$540. Actual remains of this building

were uncovered in the government's 1941 archaeological project on the site.

Insurance papers for this building show it was also built adjacent to the courthouse and was more spacious than the first. It had a fireplace on one end—the same fireplace that would warm Bolivar Sheild many winters later.

But the books did not remain on new shelves for long.

In 1812 "they were removed to the house of the clerk," a court entry shows, "as long as the British fleet infected the York River."

It must have been fate, or intuition of sorts, that withheld a court order for return of the books to the courthouse scene until Aug. 21, 1815.

#### WORST DISASTER

Had they been located on Lot 24 during the afternoon of March 3, 1814, they probably would have been damaged if not destroyed. On that day Yorktown witnessed perhaps its worst disaster in an already stormy past.

News reports moved slow and it was six days before a Richmond paper carried the first brief dispatch of the incident from Yorktown.

"About 3 P. M.," it read, "Mrs. Gibbons' house took fire and together with the county courthouse, the church, the spacious dwelling and the whole of the town below the hill was consumed."

It was a tragic finish for the magnificent structure that had been erected at a cost in levies amounting to 122,657 pounds of tobacco and had withstood the shock of seige in the Revolution.

Repairs were made to the clerk's office but the county justices were unable to meet in the fire-gutted courthouse and until 1818, convened at their homes instead.

Yorktown's third courthouse was an even finer production than its predecessors. Many records and findings, resulting from the Park Service's 1941 project, today furnish a full account of its appearance and history. It is the last courthouse structure to be

captured on camera. Thanks to the famed Civil War photographer Matthew Brady.

#### EXPLOSION WRECKED

But this building proved no more immune from disaster than its earlier counterparts and was totally wrecked by the explosion of Federal ammunition in 1863.

Twelve years passed before the citizens of Yorktown felt they could muster enough finances to erect another building.

On Aug. 24, 1875, the board of supervisors contracted to build the fourth county courthouse for \$5,865.

But in keeping with tradition the board failed to allot space in this building for the clerk and once again, the records, long since returned from the hiding place on the Mattaponi, were housed in a small, separate building near the same spot where the Sheild office had stood.

When this tiny, stucco building also became cramped for space the supervisors agreed to add a fireproof vault on the west end of the building. All of the oldest court records, including those saved by Sheild, were moved into this addition.

The need for such a vault may have been realized several years before when defective heating apparatus caused the fourth courthouse to be gutted by fire on the night of Dec. 31, 1940. The clerk's office was saved in this catastrophe.

Many years passed before York was ready to dig in again on Lot 24 and it was during this period that the Park Service obtained permission to raze the burned courthouse and conduct its four-month excavation project on the site.

#### NEW PLANS DRAWN

New courthouse plans were finally drawn but delayed during World War II. After much debate in the post war years they were submitted to a contractor in the Summer of 1954.

The fifth courthouse, the finest to stand on the historic corner lot in Yorktown, is about complete and the clerk of courts, Melville Bryant, has moved the old books into a spacious, foot-thick concrete and steel vault in the new structure.

A few days after the old stucco building was abandoned work crews quickly removed this last trace of a 75-year period in Yorktown history from Lot 24.

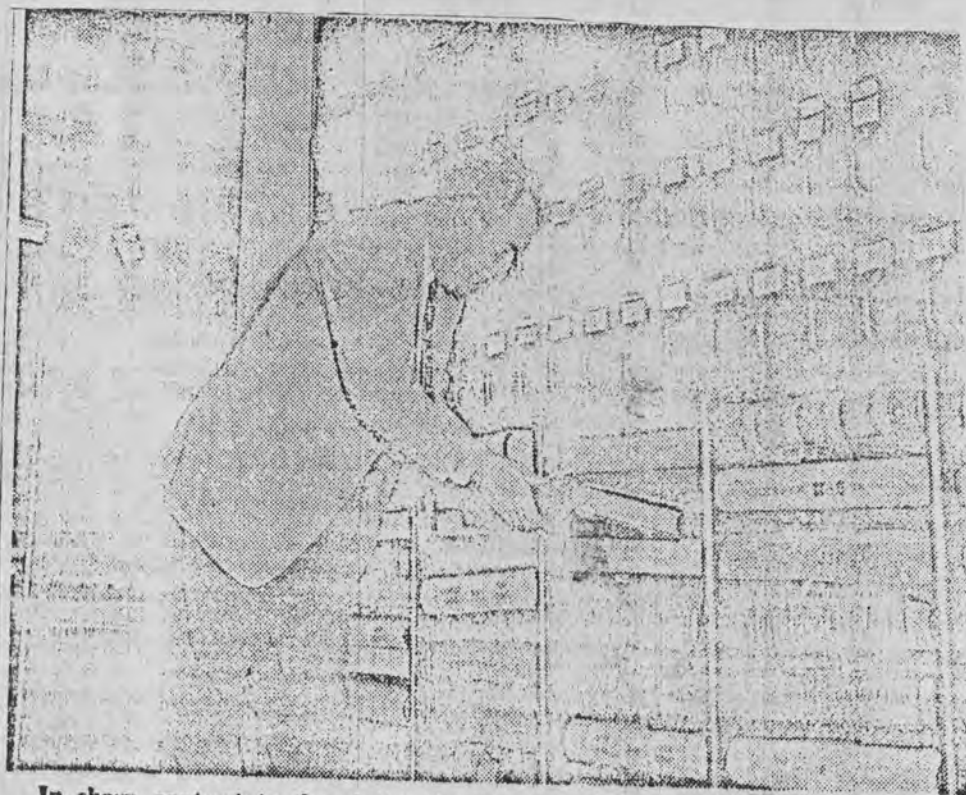
Perhaps this will be the last move of the ancient volumes for a century to come.

In any case it is not difficult to imagine that if Bolivar Sheild, or the likes of him that have held this county post during the centuries, should by some miracle be able to walk again across the familiar courthouse lot, he would find a peace of mind that escaped him in his day.

For the old books, ledgers of life during three centuries in York, are safe and secure as never before.



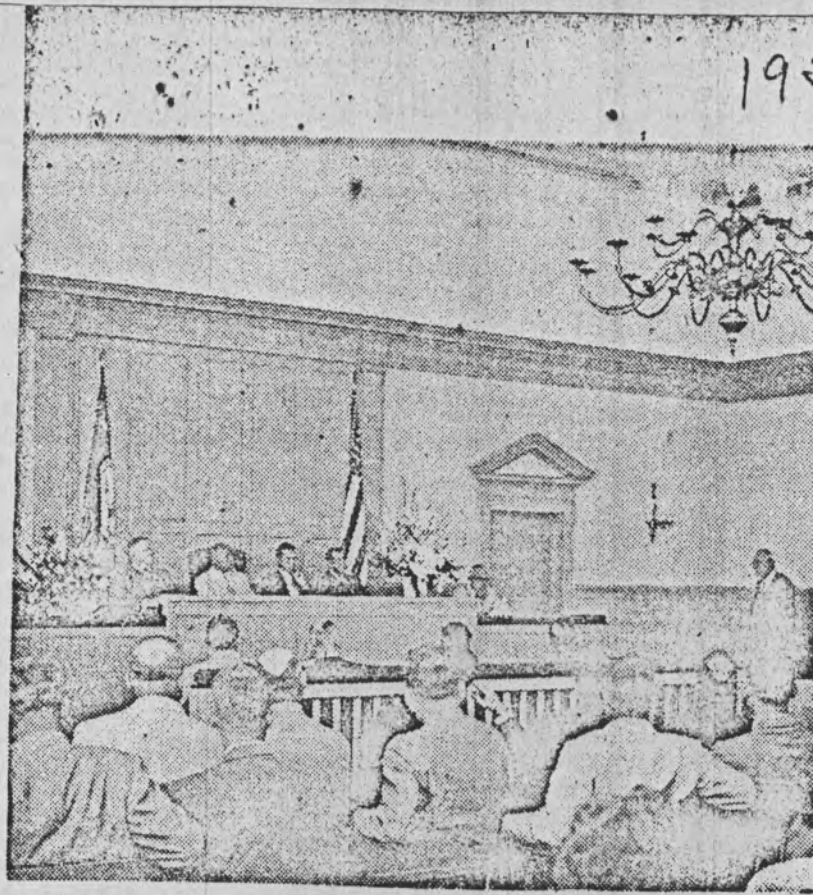
York's third courthouse, built in 1818, appears as an imposing, two-story structure in this 93-year-old Brady photograph at the National Park Service library. Federal troops occupied the site in 1862 but in 1863 stockpiles of ammunition exploded, destroying the structure. Ammunition boxes are seen on the porch in this 1862 scene.



In sharp contrast to the cluttered office scenes in the top panel is the new clerk's office now in use in the county's fifth courthouse. Clerk Melville Bryant arranges a two-century old record book on a spacious shelf in the new office vault. It is one of the books saved by Sheild.

*Note the size of a county record book.*

1956



WILLIAMSBURG, JAME  
DAILY PRESS, Newport N

## Historic York Courthouses Date To 1697

YORKTOWN, June 4—Who touched off the explosion that demolished the third county courthouse?

"Maybe the Yankees did it," grinned Judge Conway H. Shields Jr. from the bench of the fifth county courthouse today.

The occasion was the formal dedication of the newest, and no doubt the finest, county courthouse and office building ever to stand on a history-rich corner lot on Main St. in Yorktown.

The possibility that the Yankee army might have been responsible for the "accidental" explosion that rocked the community on the night of Dec. 16, 1863, was offered as an after-thought during recollection of the 93-year-old mystery by Judge Shield.

Judge Shield, a Yorktown native, reviewing the circumstances leading to the demise of four previous courthouses in the period 1697-1940, noted that it was ammunition of the "Yankee Army" which was stored in the county courthouse during the occupation by Federal troops.

He said the records hint the explosion was "accidental" but "we really don't know . . . maybe the Yankees did it."

The fifth courthouse, a proud, two-story, Colonial-type structure, stands on or near the same spot where four previous buildings burned, exploded or were razed through more than 240 years, the judge pointed out.

Yorktown's courthouse chronology:

Number One: Built in 1697 for 30,000 pounds of tobacco. It has never been determined why it was destroyed sometime after 1710.

Number Two: Built in 1733, it is the model for today's building. Occupied by British and French in the Revolution, it was destroyed in the great Yorktown fire of 1814.

Number Three: Built in 1818. Occupied by Federal troops and demolished by an explosion of ammunition in 1863.

Number Four: Built in 1875 at cost of \$5,865. Destroyed by fire on New Year's Eve, 1940.

Number Five: Plans were drawn first in early 1940's but construction was delayed until 1954.

# **\$275,000 Courthouse For York County Is Formally Dedicated**

YORKTOWN, June 4—Circuit jurists and county officials gave formal blessing to a new courthouse here today—their dedicatory remarks and prayers bringing an end to a 15 year period in which York had been without a permanent place of business at its county seat.

The majestic, Colonial-style structure, which has taken two years and approximately \$275,000 to erect, was dedicated in a brief, yet dignified, ceremony within the spacious, second-floor circuit courtroom.

More than 100 persons, including visiting jurists and members of the bar from two other districts, witnessed the proceedings.

A few brief remarks, interspersed with prayer from county clergy, was all that was needed to mark the official acceptance of the court by the judiciary.

E. S. Bingley, chairman of the York Board of Supervisors, reviewed the long planning effort that culminated with a courthouse construction contract in 1954. "This fine building is proof of that endeavor," he said.

Accepting the courthouse keys, Judge Conway H. Shield Jr. of the 14th Judicial Circuit, described the building as "the best county courthouse in Virginia."

Shield acknowledged the work of past members of the county board during his acceptance talk and concluded that it would be his task to assure that "justice is carried on in York County."

Judge Robert T. Armistead, associate in the 14th circuit, said "it is a pleasure to have such a fine courthouse" and noted that it had been his fortune to try the first case in the newly-completed building.

Judge Herbert G. Smith of the Newport News Corporation Court said it is important that "this courtroom, with all its beauty, be a hall of justice." He added that it also should be a place for something he

considered just as important—"mercy."

A fourth jurist, Judge Frank A. Kearney of Hampton, called it "fitting that this building should be rebuilt on this hallowed ground." County Trial Justice W. E. Hogg of Yorktown, chairman of the dedication program, called it the "most important of all public buildings . . . save the churches of God."

"Some have already had their rights determined within this building," he said, and in the future "there will be untold thousands more, we expect . . . we hope."

Presiding for the ceremonies was Yorktown Attorney R. Nelson Smith, president of the 14th Circuit Bar Association.

Sitting in the jury box was D. A. Powers, of Bruton District, chairman of the York board of supervisors from 1912-47; John Smith, of Grafton District, member of the board from 1916-51 and chairman for the last four years of his term and R. E. Hunt, of Poquoson, former eight year board member. All three participated in the early planning for a fifth county courthouse following a 1940 fire that destroyed the last permanent structure on the site.

Other past supervisors welcomed were A. J. Renforth, Rodgers A. Smith and E. M. Rollins.

Introduced by the presiding officer were Byron Williams, a member of the architectural firm designing the structure; Thomas Downing, president of the Newport News-Warwick Bar Association and J. Wilton Hope, president of the Hampton Bar Association.

County clergy participating in the ceremonies included the Rev. Robert L. Mayou, the Rev. Claude G. Barkley, the Rev. R. B. Marriott, the Rev. Flavian Wilson and the Rev. C. A. Zabriskie.

Visiting attorneys represented the 11th, 13th and 14th judicial circuits.

A social hour at the home of Mrs. Katherine C. Blow, county supervisor from Nelson District, followed the dedication program.

1956

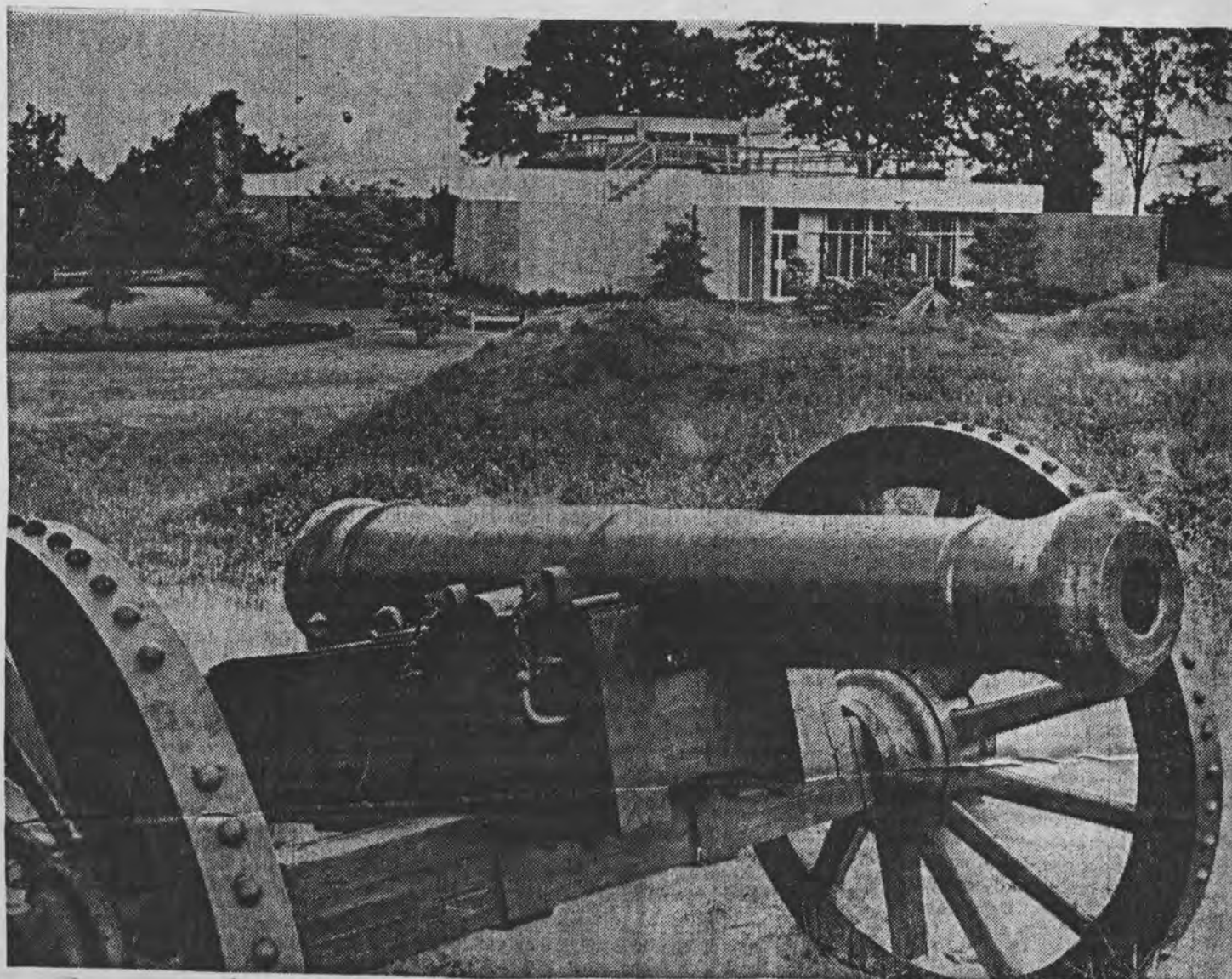
OCTOBER 13, 1957

*Yorktown Visitor Center*

*And Museum Interprets*

*1781 Battle*

(a)



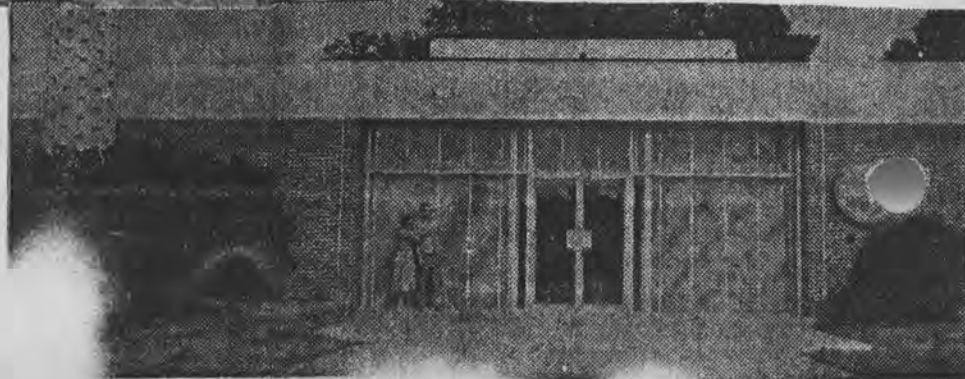


From the observation tower surmounting the Yorktown Visitor Center, one can see the very spots where history was made—besides having a wonderful view of the York River as here, where a modern U.S. destroyer plies the same waters as it did the 1781 French Fleet.

(b) visitors center



"The winning of our independence culminated in the decisive battle fought in and around the town of York in 1781. From this came a new nation, the United States of America, and a deeper understanding of liberty and freedom in the Western World"—Inscription in the lobby.



### SURRENDER FIELD FLAGS

The following eight flags are those that fly daily, weather permitting, at Surrender Field:

1. U. S. - 1781 Flag (5' x 3')
2. French - Bourbon (3 gold fleur-de-lis, 6' x 6')
3. British - Grand Union (6' x 6')
4. U. S. - 1st Pennsylvania Regiment (basically green)
5. U. S. - 1st Rhode Island Regiment (basically blue and white)
6. French - Metz Artillery Regiment (fleur-de-lis in white cross)
7. French - Tourains Infantry Regiment (with plain white cross)
8. British - Royal Welch Fusileers Regiment (three feathers)

The first three should fly on the overlook mound in the order listed above, starting with the pole on the top of the mound and descending. The other five should fly on the poles in the parking lot in the order listed above, starting at the pole nearest the overlook.

A paragraph explaining each flag is attached and should help in identifying each one and tell something of its story.

Colonial National Historical Park  
Yorktown, Virginia

August 19, 1968

1.

U. S. NATIONAL FLAG OF 1781

This flag was officially flown by George Washington here at Yorktown. Its exact birthdate is not known but probably dates back to 1775. The American Flag with an arrangement of stars and stripes was known even earlier, but no definite information as to number, design or color arrangement was mentioned. This flag is depicted in Major Sebastian Bauman's map of the Siege and Battle of Yorktown, he being an artillery officer here at the time. Also, Lieutenant Colonel Simcoe, commander of the British troops on the Gloucester side of the York River, found time to do a watercolor painting of the siege and battle and he depicts an American flag with the stars arranged in a linear design. It was definitely not in a circle as the Betsy Ross flag supposedly was.

2.

FRENCH NATIONAL FLAG

The 3-gold fleur-de-lis on a white field was the cornette blanche of the Bourbon monarchy. In this form it dates from 1589 when Henry IV came to the throne. The fleur-de-lis device goes back into antiquity. As early as 1376, Charles V of the House of Valois decreed that their number be reduced to three on the royal device. The cornette blanche was used until the French Revolution when it was banned. This flag, though still banned, evokes nostalgic memories in the breasts of Frenchmen to this day.

3.

BRITISH UNION FLAG

This flag dates from 1606 with the accession of James the First to the throne. It had the red cross of Saint George of England and the white cross of Saint Andrew of Scotland. This remained the flag until 1801 when the union with Ireland added red cross of Saint Patrick to produce the modern "Union Jack."

4.

FIRST PENNSYLVANIA REGIMENTContinental Line

A deep green field with a crimson square in the center, bearing on the square as a device, a hunter in the attitude of striking a lion enclosed in a net, with a spear. The motto below, 'Domari Nolo' (I refuse to be subjugated). It was carried by the regiment through all their battles in the Revolutionary War, from Boston in 1775 to James Island in South Carolina in 1783. It was also at Yorktown. The original flag is now in the State Library in Harrisburg.

5.

FIRST RHODE ISLAND REGIMENTContinental Line

The flag is still preserved at the State House, Providence. This regiment was formed early in the war and served with distinction at several battles, the most famous being the defense of Fort Mercer, New Jersey, in October 1777.

Flag description: White silk field. Light blue canton containing 13 five-pointed stars, gold; each star outlined with a deeper blue and having a shadow on the left side. The stars are arranged 3-2-3-2-3. In the field is a light blue fowl anchor with a dark blue rope, sewed on. Above the anchor is a motto, HOPE, in dark blue.

6.

METZ ARTILLERY REGIMENT

All of this regiment (organized in 1765) served with Rochambeau in America, 1780-1783, under the command of Colonel the Count d'Aboville. The artillery was well managed here at Yorktown, especially by this regiment. The regiment was probably landed at Jamestown along with most of the other cannon. A few of the heavier ones were unloaded at Trebell's Landing, on the James River, and hauled overland to Yorktown. Metz was one of the three ancient bishoprics which were annexed to France in 1552. In 1871 part of this Metz region went to Germany, but was recovered by France in 1919.

Flag description. White Greek Cross. 1st and 4th cantons, yellow; 2nd and 3rd cantons, gorge de pigeon (an iridescent green and reddish purple). There are golden fleur-de-lis on each arm of the white cross.

7.

TOURAINÉ REGIMENT

Organized in Tours, the capital of Touraine Province in the western central part of France. The regiment itself dates back to 1625. It was at the siege of La Rochelle, and also at Minden, 1759, where Lafayette's father was killed. It came from the West Indies on De Grasse's ships, and was brigaded on the left of the French line, between the Gatinois and Agenois Regiments, under Major-General Marquis de Saint Simon. It faced the British right, on the high bluff along the York River, opposite the Royal Welch Fusiliers, across a swampy stream. It also made a feint, or false demonstration, under orders, on the night of October 14, during the storming of Redoubts 9 and 10. The Regiment was commanded by the Baron de Saint Simon, brother of the General.

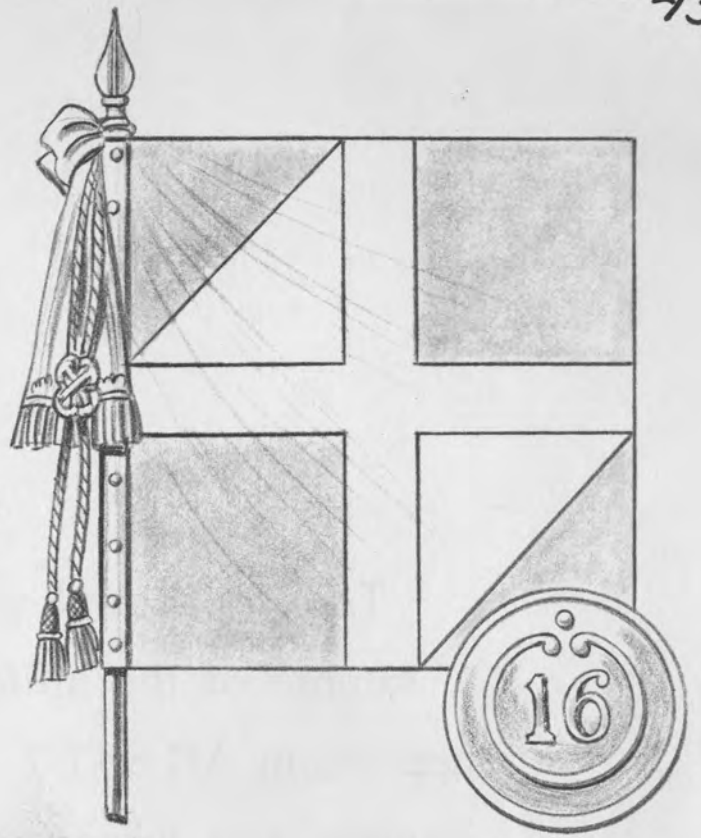
Flag description: White Greek Cross. 1st canton, auroa (a yellowish red); 2nd canton, blue; 3rd canton, green; 4th canton, red.

8.

ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS REGIMENT

First organized in 1633 during the Glorious Revolution. It has served in all of England's wars with distinction and is still in existence. It fought in almost every battle in the American Revolution. It did not surrender its colors as the Articles of Capitulation called for but, by report, a Captain Peter and another officer wrapped the colors around their bodies under their clothes and carried them back to England.

Flag description: The British Grand Union with three feathers and a scroll underneath with the inscription, ICH DIEN. The feathers and the motto belong to the Prince of Wales, hereditary Colonel of the regiment. The motto is in German and means, "I serve."



*France 1781/2*

*A Fusilier of 'le  
Régiment d'Agenois'  
at Yorktown*

*David FitzJames/74*

44

CORNWALLIS CAVE AUDIOSTATION SCRIPT

Cornwallis Cave, located here in the Yorktown bluffs, is linked to many things--to military events of both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, to Yorktown's colonial days when commercial activity was heavy here on the waterfront, to potato storage in more recent years, and to millions of years of geologic time.

About 1 to 15 million years ago a shallow sea covered Tidewater Virginia. Currents and waves swept the sea floor and many forms of sea life flourished. Shells of dead sea animals, mostly broken in the wave-tossed sea, accumulated to form thick limy beds called coquina. After the sea receded, streams, such as the York River, fed by rain and melting snow began to carve channels into the shell beds. Locally the York River undercut the steep bluffs and formed overhangs. One of these overhangs was enlarged and later modified by man to form Cornwallis Cave.

To make it usable and increase its capacity and to provide this room and the smaller one to the right, some shaping was necessary. It was then useful for good, safe storage. We can assume that it was used for storage in Yorktown's colonial days, since it was amidst stores, houses, wharves, and shops; and the area was busy with the seafaring activity of Yorktown, which was a principal port, before the Revolution.

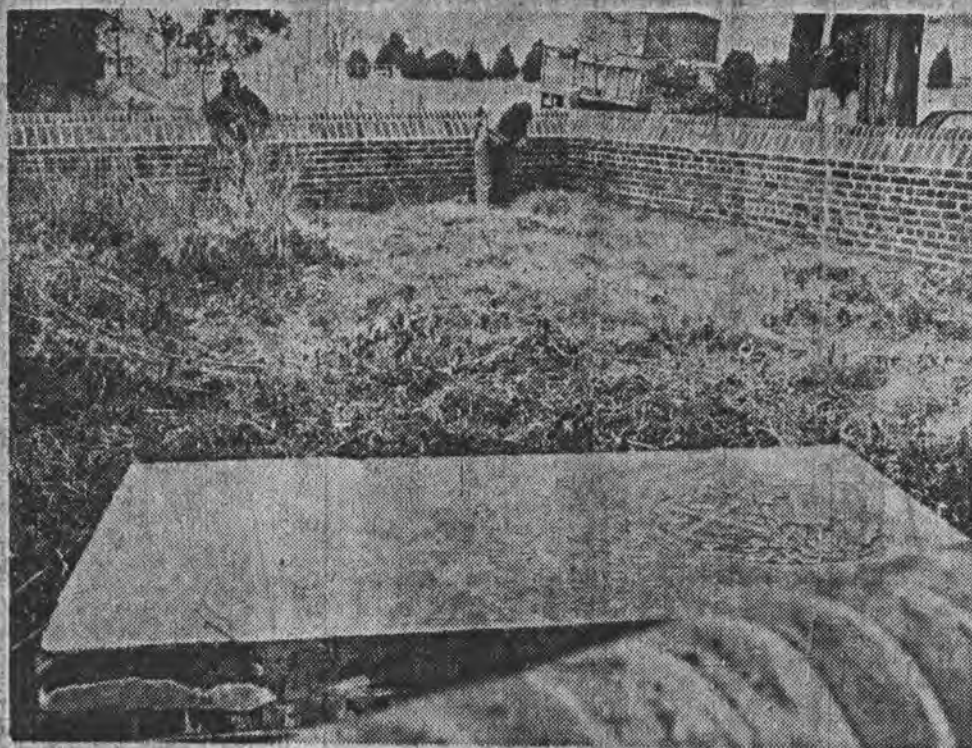
In wartime, it offered a high degree of safety, and the British found it useful. It was excellent for powder and ammunition storage. As allied artillery moved closer and became more deadly, much British activity was transferred to the sheltered waterfront under the hill. Records show, too, that Cornwallis then was forced to meet with his staff in a "grotto." This, most likely, is the spot, being the only "grotto" of this kind in the area. From this it received the name, "Cornwallis Cave."

Like the British, the Confederate command, in 1862, found the cave useful and stored ammunition in it to serve a battery nearby. For protection, the cave's entrance was ringed by an earth and timbered structure (now largely leveled) which was roofed with heavy beams and then dirt covered. The square indentations in the face of the marl wall outside (to the right of the entrance) were for these beams.

We hope you are enjoying your battlefield and town drive and that you will continue the route, following the Historical Tour directional signs. To the left, as you leave and face the River, in the restored, and privately occupied, Archer House, a marker nearby describes it. Just beyond is what was known as the "Great Valley." It leads up to Main Street and 200 years ago was the route of a principal street, though none exists here today.

If you have questions about what you are seeing, we hope you will stop at the Yorktown Visitor Center at the end of the tour. National Park Service attendants there will be pleased to help you.

Typed July, 1969



### PENINSULA'S GHOSTLIEST SECTION?

Grave of James Burwell, 29, early landowner on what is now Cheatham Annex Naval Supply Center near Williamsburg, lies alone in grove of cedars near junction of King's Creek and York River. He chose site several years before his death in 1718. Navy has reconstructed square wall from foundations which enclosed plot.

## Colonial Grave At Kings Creek Beautiful Link To Quieter Day

By PETER SIGMUND

Daily Press Military Writer

One of Virginia's most bewitchingly beautiful links with its colonial past is the grave of an early settler in a beautiful natural setting overlooking the placid waters of King's Creek at the Cheatham Annex naval supply center near Williamsburg.

Here, in a grove of cedar trees, on a wooded peninsula jutting between the wide mouth of the creek and the York River, lies a single well-preserved gravestone.

The sandstone slab is expertly embellished with a circular coat of arms showing a knight's helmet surmounted by a claw grasping a twig with four leaves.

Beneath the arms is the inscription, in ornate lettering of colonial stonemasons: "In memory of Mr. James Burwell Son of Major Lewis Burwell who Departed this Life October ye 6th 1718 in ye 29th year of His Age."

Though little is known of the 29-year-old Burwell, it has been established that his plantation was on the tract of land jutting out into the York River.

Officials of the supply center annex regard the site as the most intriguing feature of their installation which also contains a wild cow about 22 years old, three other ancient cemeteries, the site of one of Virginia's earliest churches, relics of In-

dians, Civil War battlement, and some "ghost town" reminders.

The secluded site has apparently changed little since the early settler left a simple will asking that he be buried at a point southeast of his dwelling "abutting upon King's Creek between two cedar trees growing upon the said point."

Officials at the supply center, established here in 1943, will care for the grave as long as the Navy holds the grounds.

It is surrounded by seven or eight ancient cedars which appear to have been planted in a rectangular design. Some 20 yards south, the land slopes down to the water, which resembles a small bay sheltered by the appendix-like strip of land which was once owned by Burwell.

The grave lies inside a square brick foundation of what may have been the enclosure for the burial ground, or possibly a church. No other burial plots have been found in the immediate vicinity, leading to some speculation that the site was for Burwell alone.

The land in the 17th and 18th centuries was called King's Creek Plantation, lying between King's Creek and Queen's Creek.

Across the wide mouth of the creek from Burwell's grave is the site of Ringfield Plantation which was granted to a sea cap-

tain named Robert Felgate in 1630.

covered by thick vines and dense honeysuckle are other flat grave-stones with their inscriptions almost obliterated by the centuries. Graves here include Nathaniel Bacon Sr., an uncle of the famous "Bacon the Rebel," and Joseph Ring, a planter who acquired the plantation from Captain Felgate.

Most tourists passing the Naval Supply Center area on Colonial Parkway between Williamsburg and Yorktown are probably unaware that the wooded acreage, little changed through the centuries, hides these and other reminders of the first Virginia settlers.

Across the mouth of King's Creek were other tracts settled by sea captains who chose the riverside section, which contains numerous coves, for their valhalla after their careers on the high seas.

Taking advantage of the deep water channel in the York River, ships brought materials for plantation homes like the one in which Burwell lives.

The exact site of Burwell's "dwelling house" is not known but it is believed in the vicinity of the buildings occupied by the Navy's Cargo Handling Battalion Number One at the Cheatham Annex center.

The other homes in the King's

Creek Plantation section, like Burwell's, have long since fallen. Crumbling bricks, or rows of ancient cedars outlining a former entrance drive, allow the colonial sites of several to be located.

The plantation area in World War I became a city of 10,000 population named Penniman. Here the DuPont Co. built a large factory and shell-loading plant. A passenger train had a scheduled run between the plant and Williamsburg.

Following the war, the plant was closed and Penniman ceased to be. The land was used partly for grazing cattle. A few concrete buildings are now the only reminders of the World War I plant.

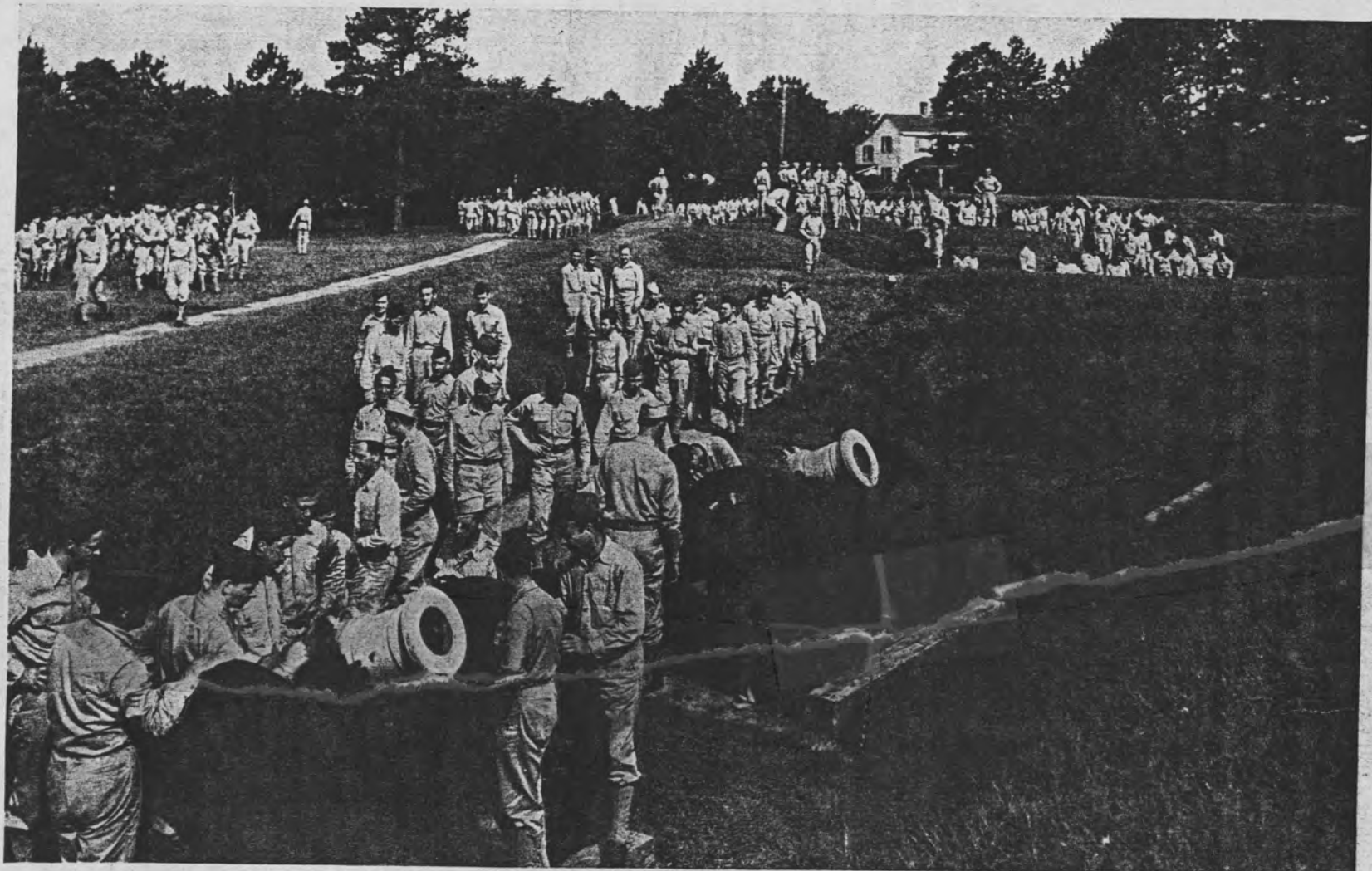
The Navy established the Cheatham Annex depot in 1943. Besides the Burwell site, it has another link with the past in a legendary wild cow, a Holstein which took to the Cheatham woods when other cows were rounded up before the Navy took over.

Over 22 years old, the cow, which limps slightly, is sighted now and then but has never been overtaken.

Three other colonial-era cemeteries also lie within the supply center's 2,804 acres. Also on the Navy property is the site of a brick church built about 1700 which was known as the Cheesecake Church (formerly Chiskick). This is believed the parish church which Burwell attended. In his will, the settler requested that a "pulpit desk and cushion be provided for the parish church."

Troops under Gen. George Washington marched through the area on the way to Yorktown

The missus  
Norton's lived  
here - torn  
down now



652

**Coast Artillerymen from Near-by Fort Eustis Visit the Grand French Battery on the Revolutionary War Battlefield of Yorktown**

U. S. National Park Service

Exact emplacements where stood the French guns during the siege were located in the recent reconstruction project of the National Park Service. Visitors today go up one of the very ravines in which the troops of Washington, Rochambeau, and Lafayette were deployed. Here Cornwallis was forced to surrender in 1781, when a French fleet under Admiral de Grasse closed the mouth of the York River, and the American and French forces surrounded the British on land (page 632).

4/6

2/1/50

## SLEEPY LITTLE TOWN

# Former York Teacher Recalls Steamboat Visits To Village

YORKTOWN — Mrs. N. F. McNorton, who will admit to only 80 of her many years members when the streets of Yorktown were of dirt and the steamboat made regular visits to the wharf in the sleepy little community on the York River.

The first salary Mrs. McNorton drew as a teacher in the York County school system at Carey Chapel School in the early 1900s was \$100 a year for a five-month school term. She was then Miss Carrie Phillips.

This fabulous salary of \$20 a month was not paid by check, for the county did not have the money. The teachers were given "warrants" for \$20, which they could redeem from Merchants for \$19, or wait until taxes were paid and redeem the full value from the county.

About the time she came to Yorktown as the bride of Dr. N. F. McNorton in 1909, Mrs. McNorton recalls eggs were 12 cents a dozen and sugar five cents a pound, measured from a barrel by the grocer. She will not tell her exact age, but with a twinkle in her eye, says

she is about 80. The family Bible holds the secret.

A recent Sunday was Carrie McNorton Day at the Shiloh Baptist Church in Yorktown where the congregation, joined by her friends from other communities, honored her for her more than 50 years of service.

Mrs. Musetta E. White gave her biography, followed by tributes from Mrs. Alleyne Blayton of Williamsburg, Dr. W. A. Franklin of Newport News, Dr. W. S. Hart of Hampton and Dr. M. M. Ward of Newport News representing the medical and dental professions; Mrs. J. R. Turnage of United Church Women; Alexander Williams of Newport News and Mrs. Freda R. Edney for the United Negro College Fund, and J. Murray Brooks from the field of education.

Mrs. Rogers Burke presided at the service, which followed the morning worship at Shiloh. Deacon George Billups presented the gift from the church, and the Rev. Richard Holmes led in a special prayer of thanksgiving for Mrs. McNorton's life and service.

Her son and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson McNorton of Richmond, were with her for the occasion.

When Dr. and Mrs. McNorton were married, they lived with his parents. For many years the father and then the son were physicians in York and James City counties.

His father bore the name of Daniel M. Norton. Mrs. McNorton still owns the saddle bags in which her father-in-law as a young physician, packed his medical supplies on his horse and crossed the York River to treat patients in Gloucester County. Though born in slavery in Williamsburg, he escaped to the state of New York where he studied medicine and returned to the south following the Civil War. He served as a physician and office holder and Liam P. Lareu received many years.

Among the bills he introduced was one calling for purchase by the U. S. government of certain land embracing the battlefield of Yorktown of Revolutionary War fame.

Doctor Norton owned one of the first automobiles in York County, but after getting stuck everytime he tried to go anywhere, he went back to his horse and buggy. Mrs. McNorton said there were only dirt roads in Yorktown when she first came here.

Her memories go back to the steamboat that regularly called at the Yorktown wharf each night, and recalls many residents made the journey to the state fair in Richmond on the boat.

## Hauling Water

She recalls the days when Yorktown residents hauled water to their homes in barrels for there was no water supply. Other homes used cisterns like the one in her side yard. She knew Yorktown when the Nelson House was abandoned and cows grazed around the house.

A very different memory of hers is the picture of the Atlantic fleet anchored in the York River during World War I, and admirals and captains were local residents. She remembers the river filled with ships and a submarine net was stretched across the mouth of the river.

She also remembers Yorktown in the days prior to the establishment of Colonial National Historical Park when the battlefield was a golf course. During one period, after their home burned and before her present home was built, they lived in the Custom House, which the family owned. A bank was located on the main flood.

Mrs. McNorton received her education in the public schools of York County, at the Spilled Academy and at Hampton Normal Industrial Institute now Hampton Institute, both in Hampton.

#### Civic, Social Work

She has been active in civic and social work in this community as well as the entire Peninsula. She taught in the public schools of Warwick and York counties, and served as supervisor at Virginia State School for the deaf and blind in Newport News.

Before the days of bus transportation for school children in York County, Mrs. McNorton and her husband helped many boys from the outlying areas of York County to get a high school education by taking them into their home to live so they could attend the nearby York County Training School. They also educated one girl.

During World War II, she was chairman of the production committee for British relief. She was also volunteer case worker for the American Red Cross, and vice chairman of the war-bond drive in York County in 1944-45.

She was a charter member of the Negro auxiliary of the American Red Cross and for a number of years served as a member of the investigating committee and chairman of the membership campaign. She is still a Red Cross worker, now serving as staff aide in the service department of the York County chapter.

During the war years, she served as a senior hostess at the USO in Lackey and at the Mine Warfare School. Mrs. McNorton has citations, letters of recognition and appreciation signed by Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, Gov. Colgate W. Darden and Basil O'Conner for meritorious service rendered her county, state and country in such positions as advisor to registrants for the Selective Service System, as registrar for the war rationing board, and as a member of the executive committee of the infantile paralysis campaign for York County.

For years, she has worked with the United Negro College Fund drive for York County and according to the executive secretary, she has always met her quota, which is supported by all residents. For several years she served as secretary for the local NAACP.

She was a charter member of the woman's auxiliary of the Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Society of the Peninsula.

## INDIAN 'LOG CANOE'

## Rare Model Of Bugeye Displayed

By ROBERT A. GRAVES  
Daily Press Yorktown Bureau

YORKTOWN — A 72-year-old model of a sailing bugeye, the class of boats known as "log canoes" and in extensive use in the latter part of the 19th century in this area and the length of Chesapeake Bay, may be the only one of its kind in the Tidewater area.

The model, an exact copy of the brogan Estelle, is owned by G. B. Sparrer of Seaford and is on display at the Grafton branch of the Citizens and Marine Bank.

The Mariners Museum in Newport News, which does not have a similar model, has shown interest in the bugeye.

## Built In 1890

The present owner's father, J. W. Sparrer, constructed the Estelle in 1890 at Seaford and sailed it for eight to 10 years in the bay in connection with transportation of goods from farm to market.

The Estelle was 50 feet, six inches in length, had a beam of 15 feet and a draft of six feet. It was constructed from five large logs and shaped and finished by Sparrer, who then constructed the exact model, now on display, from a chunk of the larger boat's bowsprit.

The model is 42 inches long and was built for the boatbuilder's brother-in-law, C. S. Teagle, who gave it to Herman Sparrer, who in turn passed it on to the present owner in 1918.

It was completely restored to its original appearance last year by John Harrison Smith of Seaford, an employee at the U.S. Naval Weapons Station at Yorktown. The only original portions of the model are the hull and rudder. It is a working model, complete with deadeyes, workable rigging and weighted centerboard.

Smith worked on the project in his spare time and it took longer than six months for the restoration.

"When I was a boy," Sparrer said, "it was really a running model boat. It would take two good men in a boat with oars to keep up with it."

Sparrer said the larger Es-

telle was built primarily to run oysters from the bay to a packing plant at West Point. His father, he said, used to tong oysters in the James River and then buy additional oysters in the evening. His activities included trips to Baltimore and Norfolk. In the summer, he said, his father loaded the bugeye with farm products such as watermelons, potatoes and corn and took them wherever he could get the best price.

"He shipped potatoes from

Seaford," he said. "He would

sail up the Pamunkey River and load corn to take to South Norfolk and other areas with mills."

Sparrer said his father sold the boat around the turn of the century and went into the boat construction business in Seaford. The last boat he constructed was the Clay, a motorized workboat which was used to dredge crabs and for other fishing.

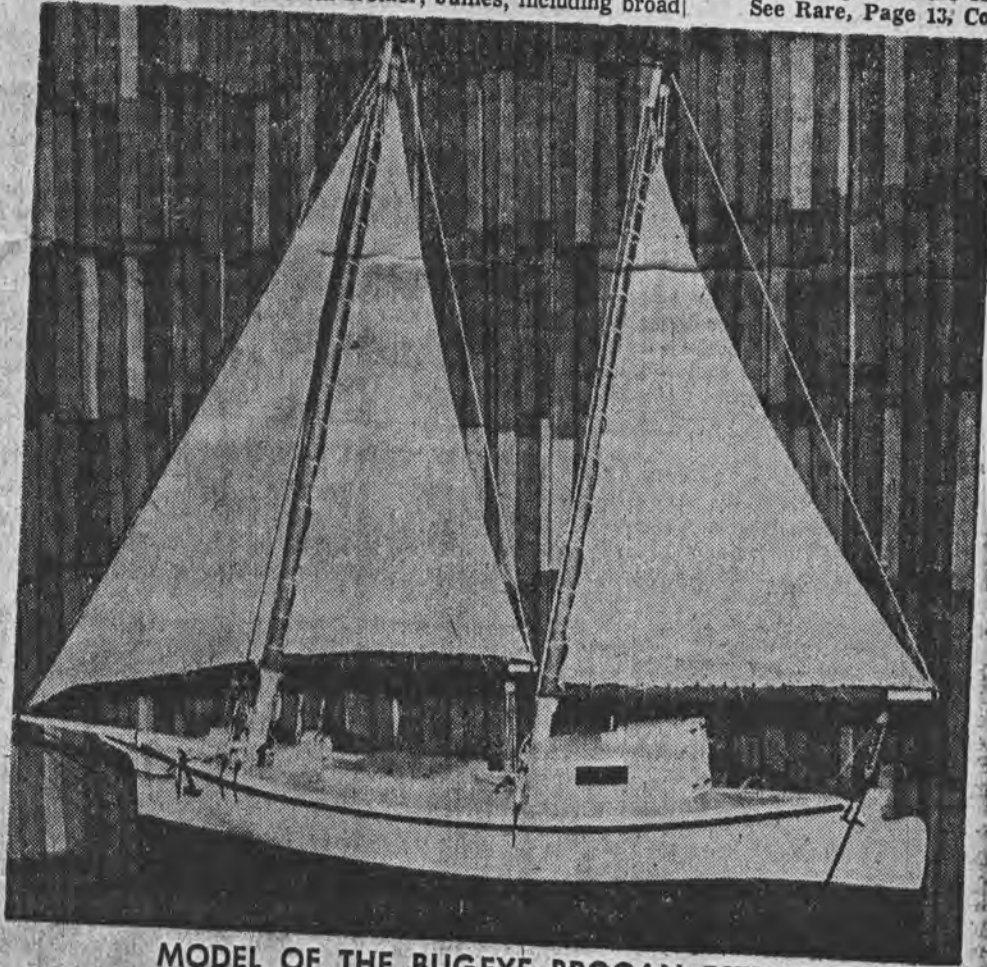
Many of the tools used by the boatbuilder are still in the possession of Sparrer and his brother, James, including broad

axe, adz, drawing knife and several planes.

The Estelle, he said, was one of a number of bugeyes constructed in that period. The boats are actually refinements of the smaller original log canoe made by the Indians. The last bugeye built in this area was the F. D. Crockett, a seven-log boat still in use in Dare. It was built by Alec Gaines.

The bugeye constituted the principal form of boating in this area in latter part of the 1800s.

See Rare, Page 13; Col. 2



MODEL OF THE BUGYE BROGAN ESTELLE

A model of the bugeye brogan, Estelle, which used to sail local rivers and the Chesapeake Bay, is on display at the Grafton Branch of the Citizens and Marine Bank. Both the original boat and the model were built

by J. W. Sparrer in Seaford in 1890 and the model was restored in 1966 by J. H. Smith of Seaford. Mariners Museum, which does not have a model of a bugeye, also known as a "log canoe," has expressed interest in it.

They were made primarily for the oyster industry since they are shallow draft boats. Originally propelled by sails, many were motorized after the internal combustion engine came into use.

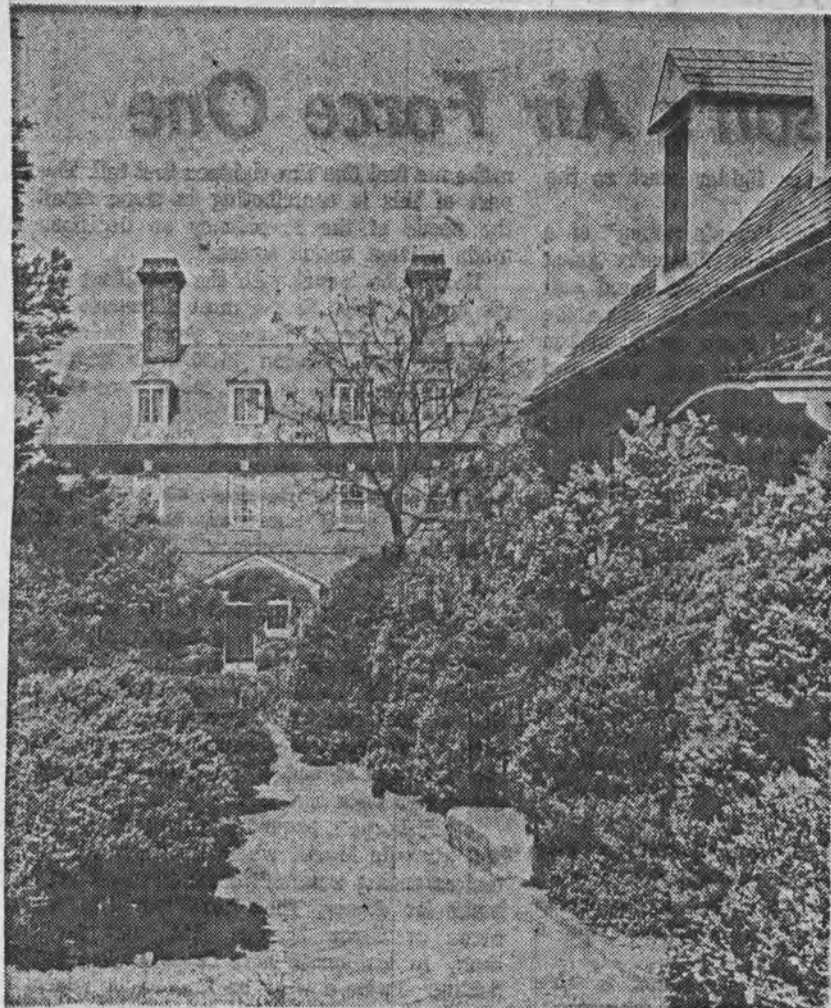
"They are very hardy boats, smart and seaworthy," Sparrer said. "The logs were so thick the boats were very tough."

Boats constructed in the Chesapeake Bay area have been well known throughout Europe and America for generations and the master ship-wrights of Virginia and Maryland have always been experimental designers of sturdy vessels for use wherever speed has been a major consideration.

The Chesapeake Bay log canoe has been traced back to the simple pole - and - paddle - propelled craft of the Indians. The Chesapeake Bay sailing canoe was a highly complex craft developed by the white man from the original Indian version. It is the ultimate development of the aboriginal dugout canoe.

The bug-eye had a reputation for smartness of appearance, speed and seaworthiness. It was conceived about 1865 and seldom went beyond the capes.

There were three principal centers for building the log canoes and the ones built near the Poquoson River were the most famous. It became the custom to call all Virginia - built craft "Poquoson canoes."



The Nelson House as seen from the garden in the rear.

# A Reminder Of Our Heritage

By STEVE P. VLAHOUGH

**W**HEN the National Park Service acquires the historic Nelson House at Yorktown from the heirs of the late George Waller Blow, possibly within the next month, the ceremony will mark the end of an era of private responsibility for the preservation of historic houses and architectural monuments.

Here in the Virginia Peninsula where permanent English settlement of North America began, the government is assuming custody of relics of the past which embody the way of life of our ancestors.

The Blow family, starting with George Preston Blow, has owned the property since prior to World War I, and has been praised by a Congressional committee for the restoration and excellent preservation of the Nelson home, often described as one of the best examples of Georgian architecture in Virginia. Dating from the 1730's, it is one of four historic survivors of the Siege of Yorktown.

TRIBUTE must be paid such organizations as the Society for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, for saving many notable memorabilia of the past, but too often the stigma of standing in the way of progress has been hurled at those who would protest the demolition of historic sites to make way for new super-highways or sophisticated high-rise apartments.

The preservation of places and objects associated with our ancestors has been a difficult task accepted by a few individuals for the benefit of many. The Blow family is a prime example.

There is, happily, an increasing recognition of the responsibility of government to do what, for example, private Rockefeller funds have done for Colonial Williamsburg.

52

is illustrated by what happened in Norfolk. With a new prosperity that the Spanish - American War brought to Hampton Roads, the American dollar and its pursuers ran like a juggernaut over the preserves of the past. "Build!" became the pass word of the closing years of the 19th Century with its accompanying corollary of "Tear Down!" "Make Way for Progress" became the slogan of the times. No one gave a thought to the obligation of saving for coming generations the cultural symbols of our forefathers. No one? Well hardly anyone.

A few people recognized the value of preservation.

JUDGE George Blow, who as a young attorney had been the protege of Norfolk's "Grand Old Man," Governor Littleton Waller Tazewell, raised nine children, three of whom can claim recognition

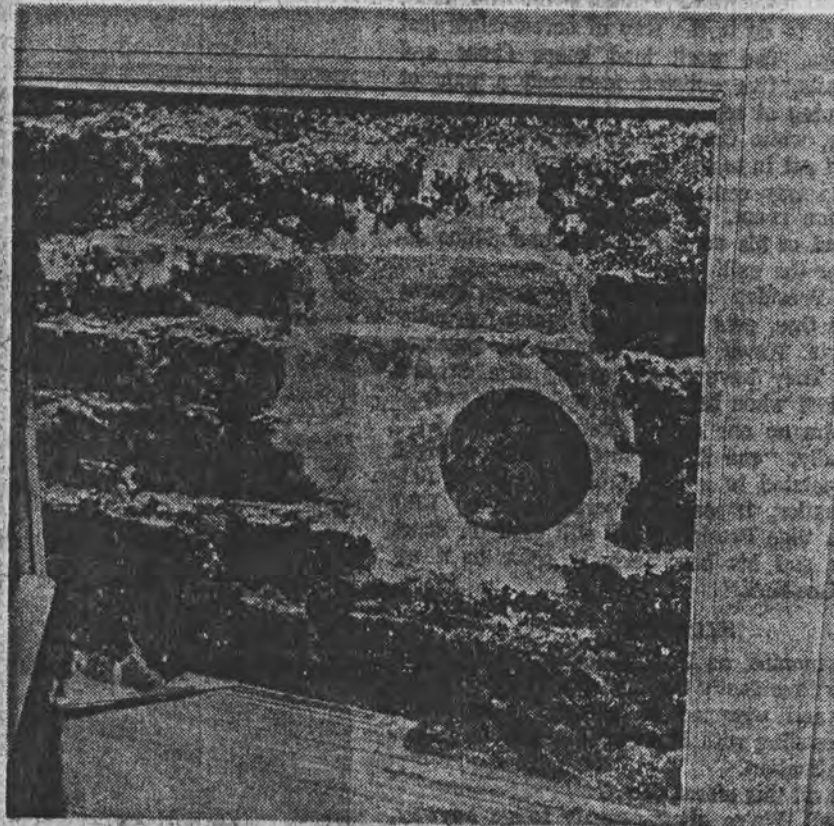
as Virginia's first preservationists: Emma Blow, the eldest, who married Arthur Clarico Freeman and adopted as her life - time project the saving of the Tazewell House in Norfolk from demolition at the hands of builders; Allman Blow who renovated "Rosemont" on the waters by Mobjack Bay; and George Preston Blow, a naval officer who had been Chief Engineer of the U. S. S. Maine when she was blown up in Havana harbor, took action.

The Tazewell House, sometimes called the Boush - Tazewell House, is the first dwelling erected in Norfolk after the fire of 1775 and is now located at Edgewater. Doubtless it is a unique example of a frame Georgian structure which will someday be pointed out as a gem of Virginia architecture. Its superb woodwork and the archway of its folding doors between Library and Dining Room give rea-

son to suspect that Minitree, the builder of Carter's Grove, had a hand in its design.

GEORGE Preston Blow married Adele Matthiesen, of LaSalle, Illinois, and resigned from the Navy after the Spanish - American War. He and Allmand were influenced by their sister, Emma, to join her in her efforts to preserve something of the historic past in Virginia.

The George Blows considered several places. The old Blow House facing on Blow Pond which many Peninsula residents remember before it became the main water supply of the City of Newport News was then still standing. So also was Carter's Grove and chickens roosted there in the Great Hall. But the place of greatest historic interest and the one most in need of repair was the home of Thomas Nelson, the Revolutionary War Governor of the Old



Cannonball imbedded in the wall was fired through a window during the siege of Yorktown.

Dominion. The Blows brought the house and began the work of restoration which was completed just on the eve of World War I. It was given the name that Nelson was reputed to have chosen for it, York Hall.

The George Preston Blows had four children — George Waller, Adele, Frederic, and Richard. Their parents died not long after the completed restoration and George Waller, the eldest son, bought out the interests of his sister and two brothers. The demise of Lieutenant Commander (his Navy Rank in World War II) and Mrs. Blow, the late Katharine Roland Cooke Blow, in the 1960's necessitated another settlement.

THE George Waller Blows had four sons: George, a Naval officer, and now a Washington attorney; Michael, in Far East with the U. S. Air Force, who

has edited Volumes in the American Heritage series and now is with the Reader's Digest; Anthony, who has built a wonderful new house for his family at Yorktown; and John, who is unmarried.

They, realizing that division of property is the end of unity, suggested that the Federal government should be asked to assume responsibility for the Nelson House and its dependencies.

The property has been appraised at \$777,000 and its purchase has been authorized by Congress.

THE estate consists of seven structures and 23 lots with a total of about eight acres, including the Nelson House, also known as York Hall, the Edmund Smith House, Ballard House, Wisteria Cottage, Carriage House and a maintenance building. Located between Nelson and Reed streets, the property stretches to the York River. The beautiful landscaped grounds include a formal garden and a swimming pool.

The Nelson House has been described as one of the best examples of Georgian architecture in Virginia. It dates from 1730, and was built by "Scotch Tom" Nelson, the grandfather of Thomas Nelson, who served as Virginia's war governor in 1781. Thomas Nelson inherited the house through his father, William.

The house, which served as a residence for the Marquis de Lafayette, during his visit to the U. S. in 1824, is a massive structure of brick with heavy walls, relieved with stone quoins and window sills. The heavy dentilled cornices add lightness, and inside there is generous use of carved and panelled woodwork. A fine stairway leads from the first to the second floors.

Photos

By The

Author

53



Antique Dutch clock at landing of one of the staircases in the Nelson House. It is Jan Henkel's 18th century burled walnut and has 19 chimes.



Painting of Mrs. George Waller Blow, late mother of the present owners.



Plaque on the side of the Nelson house—testimonial to Gen. Earl Cornwallis, British commander. Cornwallis used the Nelson house as headquarters at Yorktown.



Charles Hogg, left, son of the late County Court Judge W. E. Hogg, presents portrait to York County by way of Rodgers A. Smith, chairman of the York County Board of Supervisors.

1970

## Judge William Edward Hogg

In our midst we see daily those men who live a quiet but truly effective life, we see those men whose participation in contemporary history is a matter of common knowledge, and we see men whose varied interests manage to claim their attention in a wide area of the public domain.

York County Judge William Edward Hogg was one of those whose catholicity of tastes brought him into contact with a wide range of friends outside his lifelong devotion to the law.

He regarded the structure of the law as an old building, invitingly open for exploration, with some areas quite sound, other sections in constant need of repair and revision.

To this end he lent his investigative talents and writing skills, and his definitive work in this field "Virginia Criminal Law" has since become a guide for many Virginia lawyers on bar and bench alike.

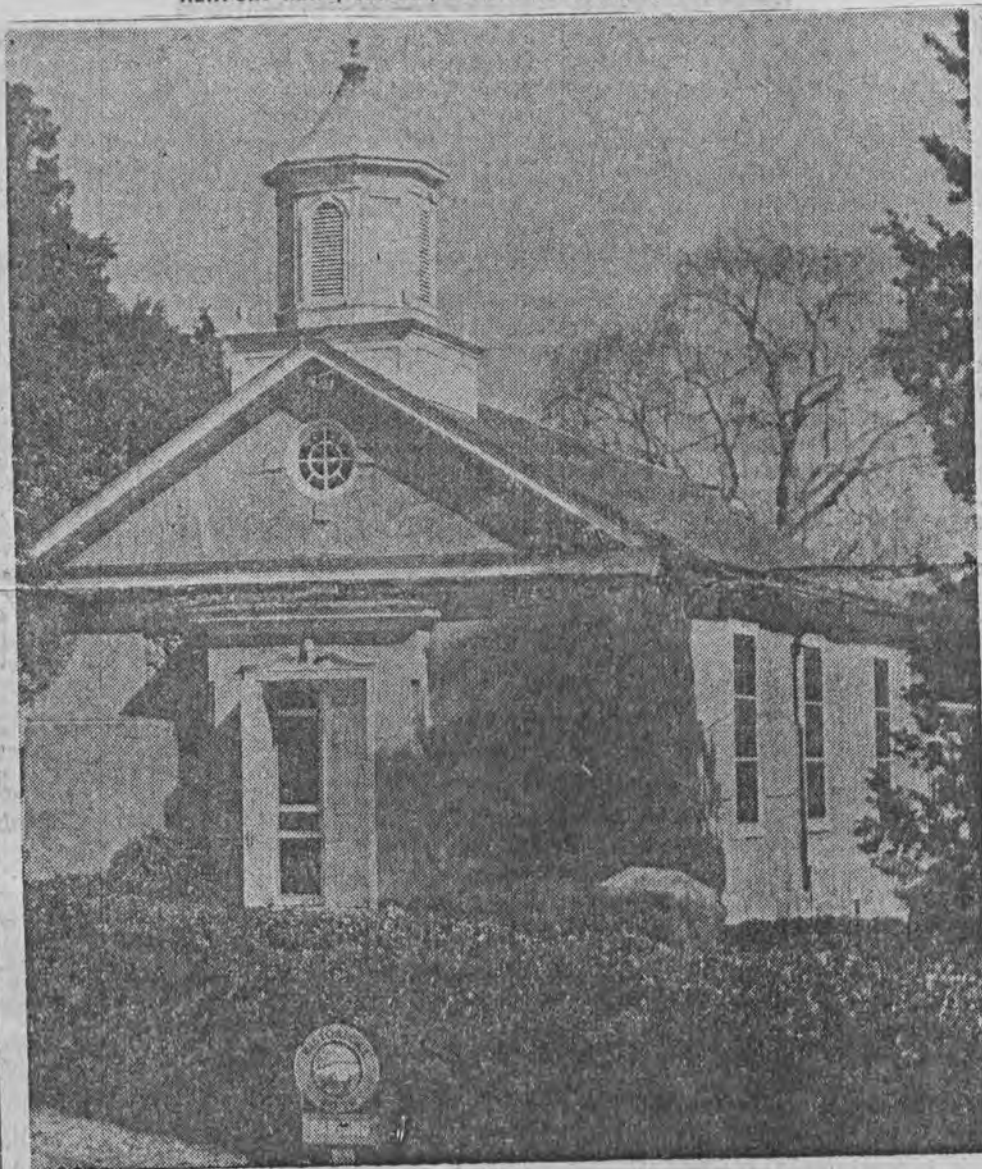
He managed this survey of criminal

studies even though serving York County as Commonwealth's Attorney for 12 years and judge for the past 28 years.

As befits any citizen whose life has been spent within sight of the York River and Chesapeake Bay, Judge Hogg was a dedicated waterman in the hours spent away from the courtroom and the law books.

He was of a different generation, this wonderfully crusty old patriarch of the bench. He was graduated from a Richmond business college at 15, taught himself law through correspondence courses, then enrolled at Washington and Lee University.

Judge Hogg was one of the solid citizens of the York community, for many years making his own quiet contribution to the welfare of the people in the area he loved. As the years creep by, the seasons change, good friends depart, and their loss leaves us the poorer. It is a somber fact that must be faced with tragic regularity.



Grace Church at Yorktown added to historic register.

## Old Yorktown Church Placed On State Landmark Register

YORKTOWN — Historic Grace Episcopal Church, keeping a watchful eye over Yorktown down through the centuries from its position of prominence overlooking the York River, has been placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register.

The register was established in 1967 by the General Assembly to list Virginia landmarks of state or national importance.

The Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission has also nominated Grace Church for the National Register of Historic Places.

Among the many fine Colonial tombs in the churchyard, one of the most beautiful in Virginia, are those of Thomas Nelson (1677-1745), William Nelson (1711-72) and General Thomas Nelson (1738-89), a signer of the Declaration of Independence and Governor of Virginia.

Thought to be the third parish church of York parish, created about 1633, it was originally called York-Hampton Parish Church

when it was built about 1697 and may be the only surviving colonial edifice built of marl. Marl is a by-product of the decomposition of shells in a base of clay and unfortunately the marl walls of the church cannot be seen, except in patches, because of a stucco covering added in the nineteenth century.

During its interesting, if not always happy history, the church was accidentally destroyed by fire in 1814 after surviving its use by Lord Cornwallis as a Revolutionary War powder magazine. The church remained in ruins until 1848 when it was rebuilt, this time without the original north wing, and renamed Grace Church.

During the War Between The States, Federal troops erected a signal tower on the roof. The interior, which was used as a hospital, suffered extensive damage, and the colonial churchyard wall was demolished. The church was returned to use about 1870.

# Old Customhouse Yorktown

One of many interesting historic structures in Yorktown is referred to today as the Old Customhouse. Located midway along Yorktown's picturesque Main Street, the well preserved brick building with spacious garden behind overlooks the sloping hillside leading down to the rivershore.

Built by Richard Ambler early in the 1720's, in the 1920's the building was acquired by the newly formed Comte de Grasse Chapter, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution. It has been through the good offices of the DAR ladies that the structure was restored for posterity so that in appearance today it must closely resemble its original appearance. Well proportioned and crowned with a hip roof of slate, it has the curious feature of having its principal chimney rise immediately in front of the single dormer window that pieces the room, on the south end.

Though privately owned and maintained by the DAR, the Old Customhouse is often opened to the public and a useful illustrated leaflet prepared by Yorktown resident Charles A. Williamson from the researches of Park Historian Charles E. Hatch Jr. has recently been published. Proceeds from the sale of this work go to the Customhouse Maintenance Fund.

The leaflet records the historic structure in the following terms: "Although the flow of imports and exports between England and her colonies was constant and of sizeable volume and variety, there were no publicly owned customhouses as we know them today. Custom collectors were planters and merchants who kept office at their place of residence, where clearances and other official papers were issued and seal and district records were retained.

"One such collector was Richard Ambler, born in York, England in 1690, who emigrated to Virginia early in life, by 1720 had settled in Yorktown. In 1724 he married Elizabeth

Jaquelin, daughter of and heiress to the owner of a large tract of land on Jamestown Island. The Amblers had three sons, John, Edward and Jaquelin, each of whom in later years also held the post of collector of customs for the York River district, a station which served a relatively large area, including the York, Poquoson and Piankatank rivers, as well as Mobjack Bay and other harbors.

"Richard Ambler prospered as a businessman, purchased lot No. 43 in Yorktown in January, 1721. On this lot, located at Main and Read streets (which was but a short distance from the then busy waterfront), Ambler built his home and his storehouse, known today as 'the Old Customhouse.'

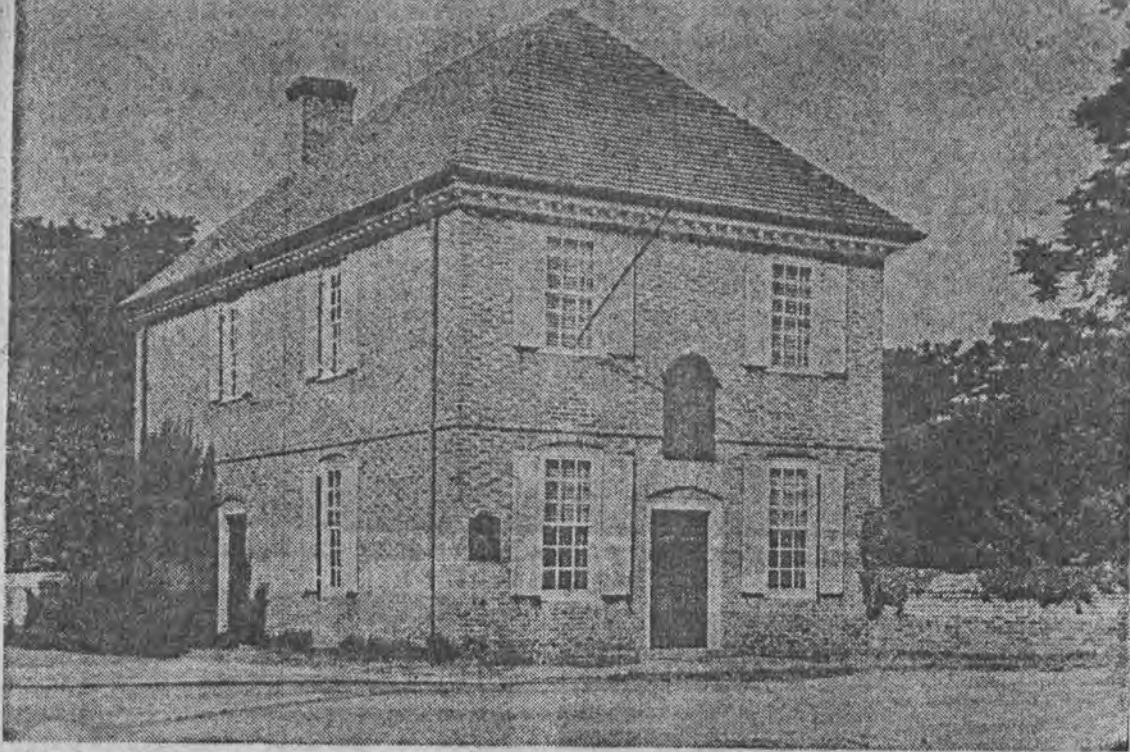
"In time the property came into the possession of the youngest son, Jaquelin, who served as county sheriff, collector of customs, was a revolutionary leader, a member of the Council of State in 1780, and from April 1782 until his death in 1798, treasurer of Virginia.

"During the revolution Jaquelin Ambler

moved his family to the interior, and his property was taken over for the use of troops stationed in Yorktown. The buildings became their barracks. The result was the complete destruction of the gardens, fences and outbuildings. When the British arrived under Cornwallis in 1781, they in turn used the same structures. These buildings were again occupied by the French soldiers who were quartered in Yorktown in the winter of 1781-1782. In the Civil War General Magruder briefly used the storehouse as his headquarters before withdrawing from Yorktown in 1862 during McClellan's Peninsular Campaign. Since then the historic building has been used as a store, a school, a bank, and at times, its second floor was a residence.

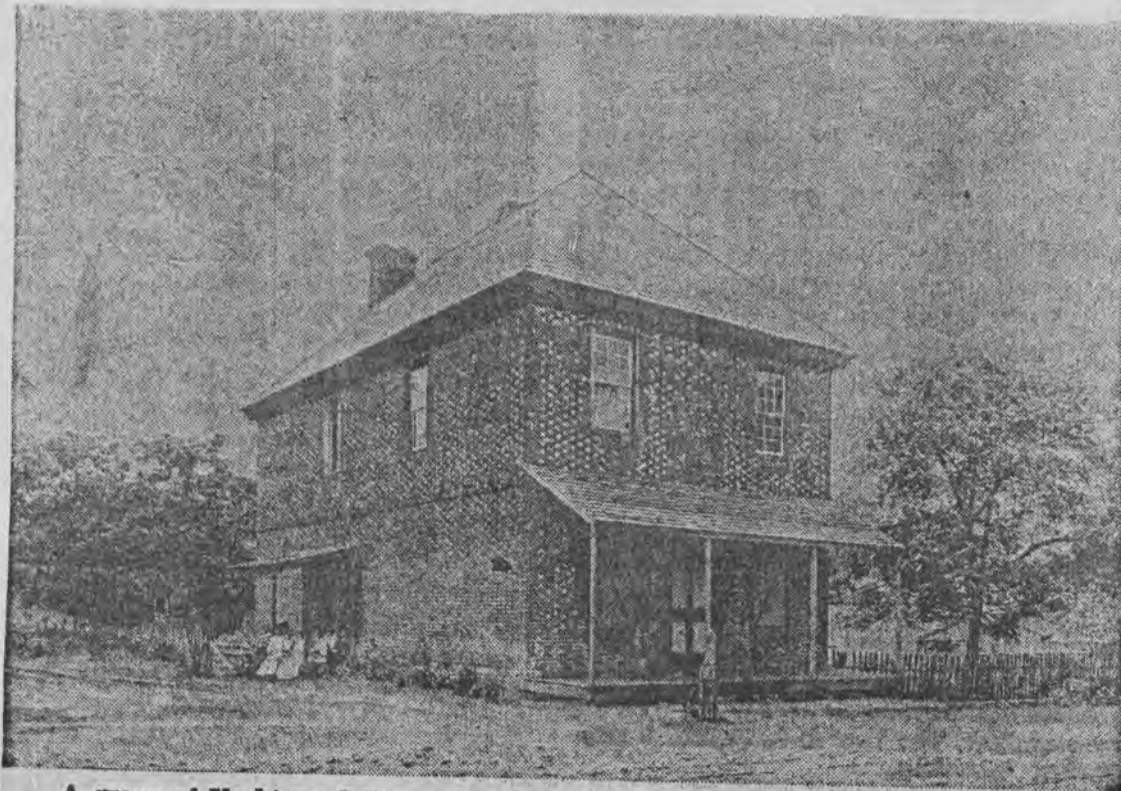
"The Comte De Grasse Chapter, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, was formed in 1922. In April 1924, the Chapter acquired the 'Old Customhouse.' By 1929-30, the structure had been restored to its present appearance. The then Governor of Virginia, John Garland Pollard, was the featured speaker on the day of dedication, Nov. 15, 1930.

"As the photographs indicate, the building is almost the same now as it must have been when first constructed. Much of the beautiful woodwork, many of the great beams and the flooring are original. Many dedicatory plaques and mementoes of Yorktown and the Nelson family, so prominent in Yorktown's early days, are on view.



The Old Customhouse undoubtedly appears today much as it did when Richard Ambler built the structure early in the 1720's. Plaque over the front door facing Main Street honors French Admiral Comte de Grasse (Alexander C. Brown photo).

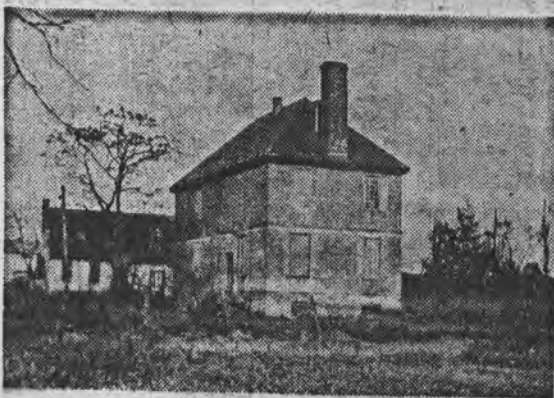
*Customhouse*  
(-67)



A group of Yorktown ladies gather on the side porch of the Old Customhouse on a summer's day early in the 20th century in this photograph by Cheyne's Studio.



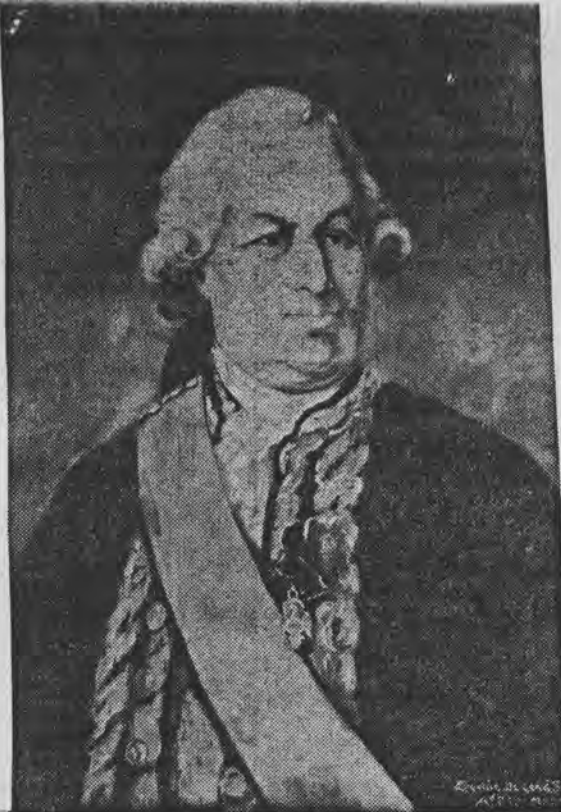
Tablet erected in 1931 by the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution honors Comte de Grasse, French admiral, whose blockade of the Chesapeake hastened British surrender.



A forlorn rear view of the Old Customhouse, 1923, courtesy of W. L. Scott.

"Ever since the Yorktown Sesquicentennial in 1931, the building has played a prominent part in each succeeding Yorktown Day, October 19 of each year. On Sunday afternoons in the summer the Customhouse is open to visitors.

"One of the chief architects of the victory at Yorktown was the French Admiral Comte



A portrait of Francois-Joseph Paul de Grasse (1722-1788), invaluable ally of General Washington in the defeat of the British at Yorktown, October 1781.

Des Grasse. In an engagement on Sept. 5, 1781, De Grasse turned back a British fleet which has been sent for the relief of Lord Cornwallis and his troops who were holding a precarious position at Yorktown. That engagement eliminated the British fleet as a threat during the land engagement which was later to follow. Admiral De Grasse was then 59 years old; he had been in the French naval service since he was 22. By 1762, he had reached the rank of captain, became chief of squadron in 1779. Two years after this event he sailed to America via the West Indies, in command of 26 ships of the line, and accompanied by a large convoy.

"It was his fleet, as well as 3,000 French soldiers and needed cash that De Grasse brought to the crucial action at Yorktown in the early days of September 1781. His place in American history ranks very high in importance.

"There were 39 charter members of the Comte De Grasse Chapter when it was formed in 1922-1923 under the leadership of the late Mrs. George Durbin (Emma Leake) Chenoweth. The late Mrs. George Preston Blow of the Nelson House, Yorktown, was in-

strumental in obtaining the property on which the Customhouse stands. The late Mrs. Letitia Pate Evans, whose surname is connected with an early Yorktown family, donated funds for the restoration and its upkeep. The National Society DAR, The Virginia State Society and its Regents and many interested individuals have been instrumental in the acquisition and the continued maintenance of the historic building."

Customhouse (c)

60  
A 2594. SLAB FARM -  
WAINWRIGHT-OLD STORES. "Slab  
Farm" or "Slab Town" in York  
County (Va.) is located just behind  
the National Cemetery at Yorktown  
and is visible to the left on the Moore  
House Road. I have heard that one  
Mr. Phillips, Dr. McNorton's wife's  
father, bought this land so that the  
slaves would have a place to live.  
The yards had slab pieces, hence the  
name. It was later changed to

NEW DOMINION, Sunday, Sept. 9, 1973

"Union Town". There are only a few  
families there now. As they adjoin  
the Park Service, the Park Service  
buys the property when available.

I have enjoyed reading about the  
Wainwright deeds. I knew they  
owned nearly all of the Showalter  
tract of land, but I did not know  
about the other. Thank you.

I wish you would publish the dates  
when old stores were started in York  
County (Va.). Our store is nearly a  
hundred years old. It was first W. T.  
Wainwright and Brother, then for  
years W. T. Wainwright, and in 1916  
it became W. T. Wainwright & Son. I  
would like to know the year W. T.  
Wainwright & Brother store was  
started.

Thank you for the nice articles you  
have in the paper every Sunday.  
(Mrs. Sadie D. Wainwright, W. T.  
Wainwright & Son, Grafton, York  
County, Virginia 23490).

ANSWER: This letter did become  
misplaced for quite some time  
among the great amount of mail this  
writer does receive and is being  
published now, but to answer the  
date as to the beginning of the  
business of W. T. Wainwright &  
Brother, it would be only by search-  
ing the records of York County  
Court for the date of the issuing of a  
license to operate the business. I am  
sure that such a records is available  
there. — Ed.



Old Fashioned Store In Grafton

90 Years Old

# And Still Going Strong!



An interior view of the store taken in the early part of the century. On the right is W. T. Wainwright, the founder, and his son Henderson, who now owns and operates the store. The customer is unidentified. On the left is a recent view with Henderson Wainwright standing behind the counter which has not changed.

By CHRISTINE SMITH

The first store to open its doors in Grafton, Va. more than 90 years ago is still in business, and offers its customers much the same services as in earlier days.

Originally opened as a general store by W. T. Wainwright and his brother Jesse C., the store is now owned and operated by Henderson C. Wainwright (son of W. T.) and his wife Sadie, who came here as a bride in 1916.

The present Wainwright left school at the age of 12 years to help out in the family business after all his older brothers and sisters had married and moved away. He has now been with the business 69 years.

The atmosphere of the store hasn't changed much over the years. Benches still are a convenient distance from the warmth of a cozy stove in the center of the floor, where the men can come in and reminisce about the "good old days." They begin to gather, each evening right after supper, coming from Hampton, Newport News and all around to talk of potatoes, hunting and farming.

The Wainwrights remember the excitement caused when the site of Langley Air Force Base was decided, and the lively discussion of it at the nightly gathering.

"In the old days", remembers Wainwright, "there wasn't so many people but they were very honest. Things were often left on the store porch at night. One night a fellow took a barrel of flour. Father tracked him home, made him return the flour and this didn't happen again. Now we can't leave anything out overnight, and the store has been robbed two times in recent years."

Ledgers from the 1880's are still kept and show purchases from customers long dead. One entry for Chidley Wade, sheriff of York County in 1886, shows that he was a steady customer of the Wainwright store. Among other things, his account shows the purchase of

a bonnet for his wife at the cost of \$1.75.

While merchandise carried by the store hasn't changed much, entries in the ledger shows the difference in the prices of today and the good old days. One entry made in 1885 lists a suit for boy, \$10.00. Shoes for the same customers wife cost the sum of \$1.25. Food prices were a lot different then also. One pork shoulder could be bought for .90 cents, tea .05, fish .20, and ham was 12½ cents per pound.

During these early years there were no cans or bottles and paper sacks were virtually unknown. Items sold were weighed, wrapped

in heavy brown paper and tied with twine. This twine came in cones which were installed in a metal hanger to be pulled down for use, and it is still being used in the same manner today.

Most of the items used in the store are the original ones in use during its early years. The old fashioned curved showcase with its display of penny candy, the Maryland Biscuit cookie boxes, the safe, still bearing the name W. T. Wainwright and Bro., and the ice box, a late comer to the store being purchased in 1930, are still being used.

The community children still come, clutching pennies or nickels to gaze longingly at the assortment of penny candy and cookies before making a final choice.

The merchandise found in the Wainwright store is pretty much the same as in past years. Food stuffs, dry goods, shoes, clothing, dishes, stoves and even zinc tubs may be purchased here. "In years past", remembers Mrs. Wainwright, "we sold furniture, and non-congolium rugs by the carload. Flour was bought in wooden barrels then also and we sold a lot like that." The Wainwright store also had the honor of selling the first buggy ever purchased in York County.

Progress has endangered the store twice in recent years. When Highway 17 was changed, the Wainwrights thought business would drop off, but they soon found that is made little difference. Later, when the shopping

center was built, it seemed that the little store would have to close its doors, but the customers continued to come. The Wainwrights think perhaps this might be due, in part, to the feed for stock, and other items the shopping center doesn't handle. It could also be the atmosphere of leisurality shopping and dealing with an old, well-liked family.

The store, a wooden structure, has never suffered from a fire as many old buildings have. Each night the Wainwrights check just before locking up, to be sure no cigarettes have been left burning and to see that all is secure for the night.

The 81 year old Wainwright has a wealth of other interests outside the store. He enjoys hunting and trains his own bird dogs. Both he and his wife make a garden each year and have a few chickens. Mrs. Wainwright enjoys making rugs, and an assortment of artistic handiwork.

The house which adjoins the store was built in 1847 and has the same architecture as many of the houses in Williamsburg and eight of the doors in this structure are handmade.

So time marches on in its eternal quest for tomorrow but here and there among the dark corners are patches, seemingly forgotten that contain the essence of time standing still. It would seem that time, in its wisdom has seen fit to pause here in the Wainwright store and invite the modern visitor into the past for a brief visit.



63



Glass-faced cookie boxes like these are not to be seen in modern super markets.



The house, which adjoins the store, was built in 1847, and has the same architecture as many structures in Williamsburg



# Approaching Bicentennial At Yorktown Suggests Century-Old Surrender Day Observances In 1881

1971

By Parke Rouse

Five years from now, in 1976, the United States will celebrate the 200th anniversary of its independence. Plans for world's fairs to mark the bicentennial are afoot in Boston and Philadelphia, while a Federal commission in Washington is pondering a nationwide blowout.

Not to be outdone, Virginia and the other 12 original states are also planning whoop-de-dos, designed to draw tourists and stir up patriotic heartthrobs.

Whatever happens, it'll be hard to beat the national outburst which brought the first centennial to a close in 1881 at Yorktown. President Nixon's commission must work hard to equal the giant splash which President Chester Arthur and a host of other VIPs made on Yorktown's historic battlefields on October 18, 19 and 20 in 1881.

THE 100TH anniversary celebration began in 1876 with the Philadelphia Exposition, hailed as "the greatest international exhibition ever held in America." Held to celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, it attracted an unheard of swarm of 9,910,996 people to the City of Brotherly Love. Though it brought in less than half of the \$8,000,000 it had cost, it was considered a great success.

Five years later, Virginia was host to the grand finale of the Centennial. The occasion was the 100th anniversary of Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in 1781. Never before or since has such worldwide attention been focused on the Old Dominion.

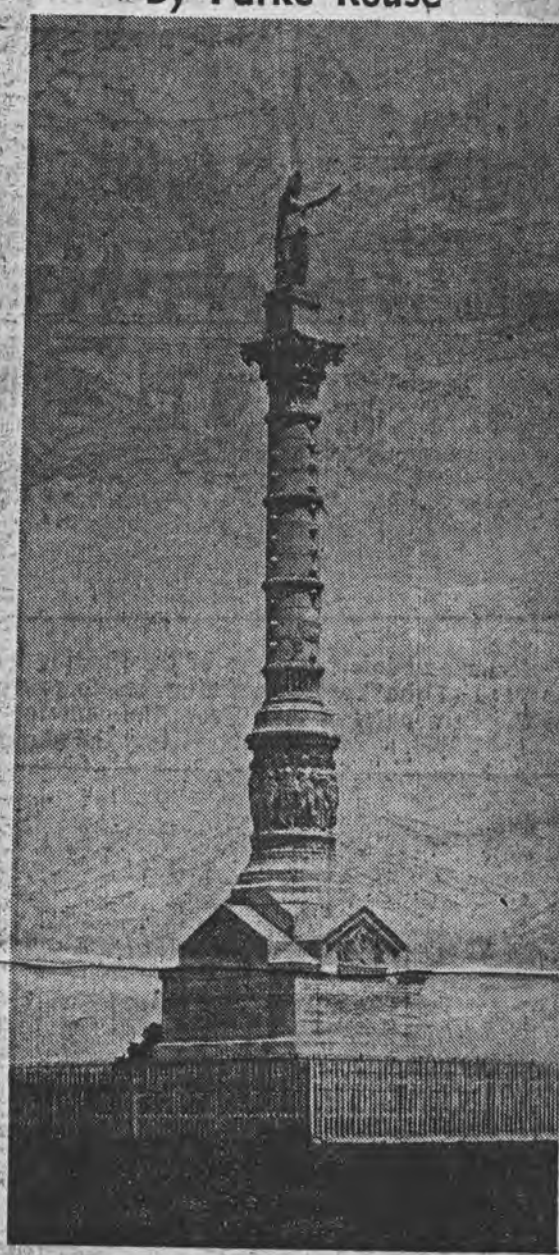
The scene was Yorktown, a muddy village of 200 souls on the bank of the York River. There for three memorable days in October 1881, gathered nearly all of the Cabinet, Congress, Supreme Court, and military leaders of the nation.

IN ADDITION, each of the 13 original states was represented by its governor, his staff, and members of many of the militia units which had once helped George Washington and Count Rochambeau defeat Cornwallis and bring the American Revolution smashing to an end.

The celebration began on Tuesday, Oct. 18, when Masonic leaders laid the cornerstone of the Victory Monument, in the presence of President Arthur, Governor Frederick Holliday of Virginia, and other top-hatted officials.

President James Garfield, who had sponsored the Yorktown Celebration and planned to attend, had been shot by an assassin in Baltimore on the preceding July 2 and had died Sept. 19, whereupon Vice President Arthur had succeeded him. Many in the audience still were mourning for the late President.

To get ready for the great day, troops and carpenters had converted sleepy Yorktown into a tented



An early photograph by Cheyne's Studio, Hampton, shows the Victory Monument surrounded by a picket fence. The figure surmounting the monument was damaged by lightning and has since been replaced. The remainder of the monument is now almost a hundred years old.

66

October 17, 1971

city overnight. At temporary wharves along the York River, U.S. Naval and merchant ships disgorged thousands of spectators, who swarmed up the hill to Main Street and over the onetime battlefields. Many visitors were disappointed. "Nothing but whores, beggars and pickpockets," one wrote.

Near the Augustine Moore house, where the surrender had been signed in 1781, the Army and various Masonic lodges had thrown up temporary housing.

A SPECTACULAR FEATURE was the arrival at Yorktown of the passenger train from Newport News — the first in the Peninsula's history — crammed with Senators, Congressmen, and Supreme Court justices. It rolled over temporary tracks which had been hurriedly laid down from Lee Hall, ten miles away. This spur connected with the main line of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, which Collis Potter Huntington had only just extended from Richmond to its eastern terminus at Newport News. The track was put down just in the nick of time. In fact, the ceremonial golden spike connecting Richmond by trackage to Newport News was driven near Williamsburg only on October 16 — just two days before that Great Morning. In those days, the C&O's main line ran down the center of Duke of Gloucester Street.

The Masons laid Victory's cornerstone in high style. Past the President and governors they marched in Masonic garb, bearing rods, swords, and ceremonial objects. (The program listed "Two Stewards with white rods, Master Masons six abreast, junior deacons six abreast, senior deacons six abreast..." and "visiting brethren from other grand jurisdictions...")

When the American flag was unfurled, Army and Navy guns on ships and in the camps nearby fired a mammoth salute.

A WEALTH of coins and other mementoes was buried in the Masonic box beneath the cornerstone. These ranged from valuable Revolutionary coins to worthless Confederate bonds, all given by Masons throughout Virginia. Other miscellaneous items thus interred were a Richmond postoffice schedule of arrival and departure of mails for Sept. 26, 1881, a copy of the Virginia Real Estate Journal, and a Warrock-Richardson Almanac.

Throughout the ceremony, the Masons reverted to the refrain:

"With joyful hands today  
This cornerstone we lay,  
With corn and wine and oil."

The climactic day came on Friday, October 19. While the Navy fleet rode at anchor in the York, the red-coated Marine band marched onto the Monument Field, overlooking the river, and played a two-hour concert.

Continued on Next Page

in recognition of the friendly relations so long and so happily subsisting between Great Britain and the United States, in the trust and confidence of peace and good-will between the two countries for all the centuries to come, and especially as a mark of respect for the illustrious sovereign and gracious lady who sits upon the British throne (Queen Victoria), it is hereby ordered that... the British flag shall be saluted by the forces of the Army and Navy..."

AFTER THE FINAL BUGLE call had sounded, President Arthur boarded the U.S.S. Despatch and steamed out of Yorktown harbor back to Washington, while the big guns sounded a 21-salvo salute in his honor. Close behind him steamed the U.S.A. Tallapoosa, bearing Senator David Davis of Illinois, president pro-tem of the Senate, who ranked next the President in the absence of a Vice President.

Two days later, the remaining Navy ships moved out of the harbor and started back to their stations, leaving Yorktown once again a quiet country town.

After that, it remained only for the Army to clear away its tent camps and return Yorktown's farmland to useable condition. This was soon done. The Army had estimated its site reparation at \$13,200 but when the captains and the kings had departed, this was found to be inadequate. Congress was pleased with

the celebration, however, and ordered the deficit paid.

THE WORK of erecting the Victory Monument consumed two more years. In January 1884, it was (at length) completed. It remains today as one of the few visible evidences of the 1881 celebration which brought 25,000 people to Yorktown.

To his fellow members, Senator John W. Johnston of Virginia, who was Chairman of the Yorktown Centennial Commission reported the results of the celebration in a 169-page document, delivered to the U.S. Senate in 1883.

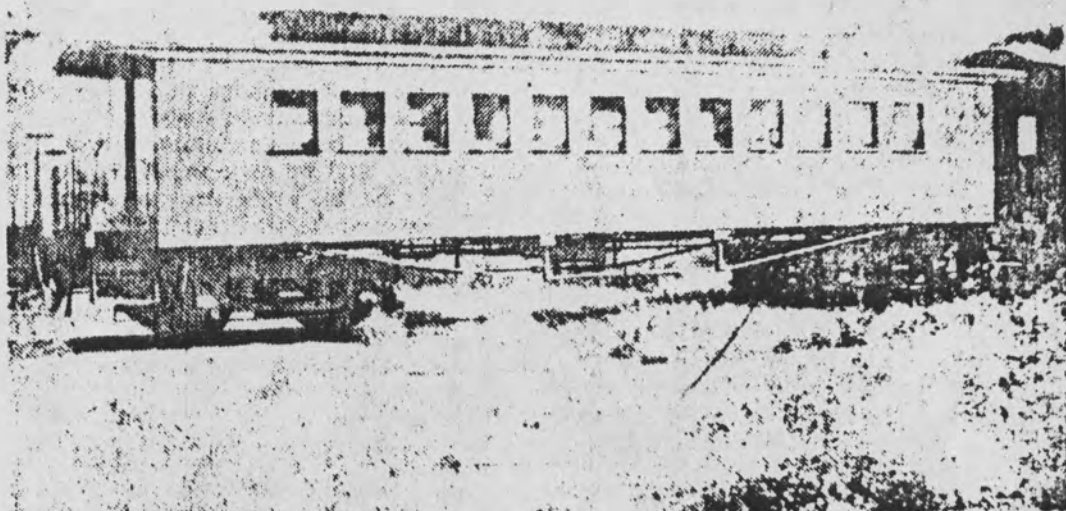
"The Commission is of opinion that the Centennial celebration at Yorktown has been productive of great and lasting good to the people of the whole country," he wrote, "in bringing together many thousand representatives from all sections of the Union...."

"The assembling of our people on this occasion has done much to strengthen their attachment to their common country," Johnston concluded, "and their pride in that Union which was made possible by the heroes of Yorktown one hundred years ago."

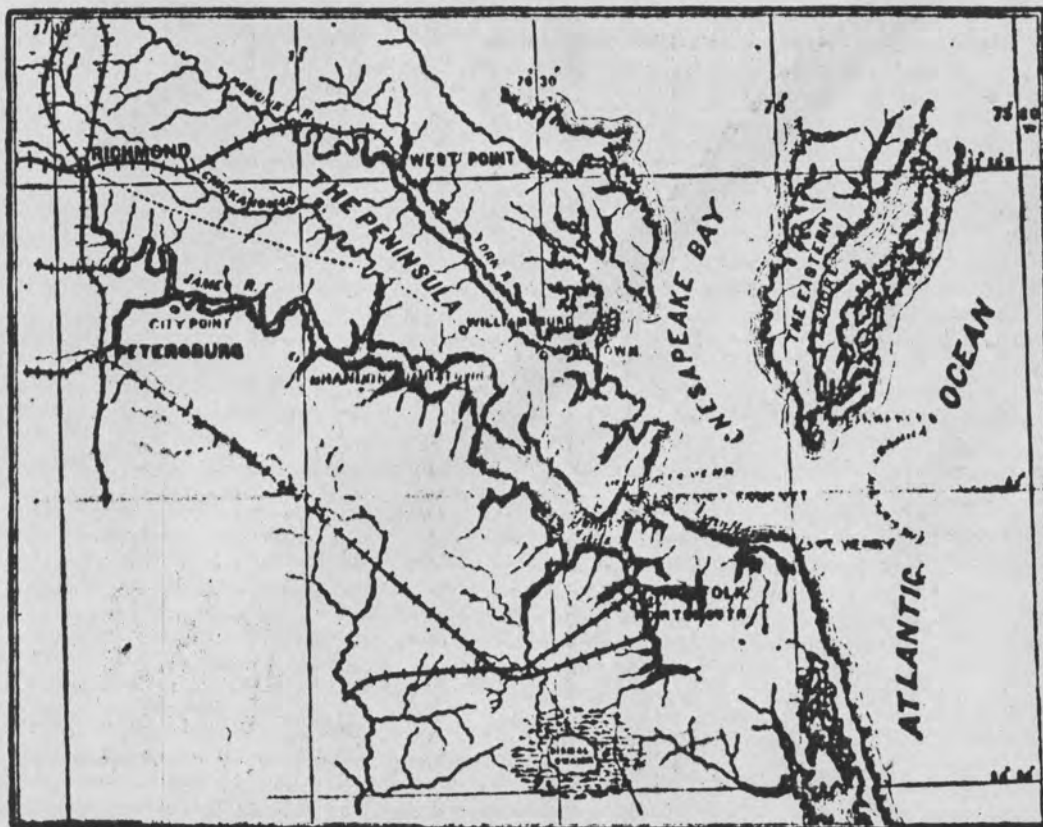
Such was America's celebration of the great Revolutionary victory in 1881.

As the bicentennial of 1976-81 nears, planners in Washington and Richmond are considering how the nation born in the Revolution can best celebrate its 200th anniversary. Yorktown—to a large degree restored by the National Park Service—is bound to figure prominently in their plans.

Whatever the planners decide they are not likely to surpass the excitement generated at the great gathering on the Yorktown battlefield a century ago.



A wooden passenger day coach of the type probably used to carry passengers to the Yorktown Centennial in October 1881. The first train to leave Newport News consisted of locomotive and tender and two such cars. Photo courtesy of the C & O.



A map of the Virginia Peninsula published in December, 1872 issue of Scribner's Monthly magazine shows by dotted line the proposed extension of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway from Richmond east to Newport News, here spelled "Newport's News."

**LEE HOUSE, YORK CO.**

**LEE-FELGATE -ADKINS-WOOD -  
BAKER-WILLS -MOSS-PERKINS.**  
"I've been waiting to see the bulletins of your historical society, but all I've received is notice of one meeting. Then in today's paper I note you were with the Langley Research Archeological & Historical Society copying grave stone records at the Lee House (York Co., Va. located on Naval Weapons Station)."

"In my notes I have an article on the house clipped from the Daily Press (Newport News, Va.), 9 June 1957. If they'd be interested I can make a copy."

"I doubt if the house was built "c. 1630-40" — more likely c.1650 as the land was not granted to Henry Lee until 1644. He died 1657 and the home remained in the family until it was taken over by the U.S. Government in 1918. A fire had destroyed the interior of the house in 1915, but the outer walls remained. The original windows have been enlarged on front but the gable ends and T-shaped chimney caps are original. Extensive repairs were made to prepare the house for occupancy in 1927, but it was declared a restricted area and not occupied. In 1957 the Depot Garden Club was undertaking a landscaping project."

"Henry (Lee) was a Doctor. As far as I know his origin is unproved. He was a contemporary of Richard Lee and the two men seem to have come to America together (headrights). They owned land together; both were Justices, York Co. (Va.) 1646. Richard (Lee) was Burgess 1647; Henry in 1651. The Daily Press story states that both lived on the 247 acres tho they acquired other lands later."

"Kashkashiac is found also spelled Kiskiack, Cheschiache and Kiskyache. It was sold to the U.S. (Government) by William Warren Harrison Lee." (Note: This Indian name "Kiskiack" is the name of the Lee House property.—Ed.)

"A York Co. (Va.) record 1644-45 shows the wife of Dr. Henry (Lee) was first mistress of the house:—Richard Lee and Henry Lee, Planters, acknowledge indebtedness to Sibella, widow of Robert Felgate. She gave nine cattle to Henry Lee which belonged to John Adkins (formerly in custody of Robert Felgate who married the mother of John Adkins, brother of Marah, wife of Henry Lee.)"

Dr. Henry and Marah (Lee) had daughters and a son Henry 1645-1694. Henry Lee, 2nd, married Alice, heiress of Wm Davis; she married 2nd Richard Wood. Children were William and Henry. Francis Lee whom you mention as living in the house was perhaps Francis d. 1753, son of William. He too had a son Francis."

"I myself was (mildly) interested in a Baker Lee of York Co. born about 1800 who married 1828 Frances dau. of Matthew Wills and Lucy Moss Jones. Children were Baker P., Martha (Perkins), Francis Lightfoot, and Wills Lee. It's the Lees in Orange (Co., Va.) that I'd like to know better — but this item above gives me a chance to say Greetings." Signed — Florence C. Montgomery, 8 Woodbury Forest Drive, Hampton, Va. 23360).

## Yorktown Lights Ordered Back On

YORKTOWN — Its on again, but hopefully not off again for Yorktown's street lights which were turned off Thursday because of a feud between Town Trustees and York County.

The lights have been ordered turned on again by J. E. Ames III, district manager for the Virginia Electric and Power Co.

Ames said that Mrs. Mary Mathews asked Vepco to cut the lights on and will be temporarily responsible for the electric bill while the feud is worked out.

He said the transaction between Mrs. Mathews and Vepco would be handled as with a private customer.

As a result the lights turned off one day — an all-day job — were turned back on again the next day — another all-day task.

While the feud has not been settled the work has kept Vepco's linemen in practice.

The trustees have been paying for the street lights for many years, but balked at continuing the responsibility when State Alcohol Beverage Control Funds were sent to the county, instead of the trustees, because of a change in law.

The four month overdue bill only amounts to a little over \$200, but trustees feel they can no longer afford the lights.

York County Administrator William P. Larew, on the other hand, contends the county cannot provide street lights for Yorktown without providing them for all areas of the county.

H. Gray Forrest, member of the Board of Supervisors from Poquoson, said that if the board decided to pay for Yorktown's light bill, he would introduce a motion to provide then for the entire county, including the Town of Poquoson.

Board members instructed Larew that if Mrs. Mathews pays for the lights, he is to make it clear that the board's position will not change.



Lineman in bucket on end of a trunk extension arm reconnects street light at Yorktown.

# Yorktown Expected To Be Eligible For ABC Funds Again

By ROBERT GRAVES

Staff Reporter

YORKTOWN — Eligibility of Yorktown to receive Alcohol Beverage Control funds, cut off since last year due to a mistake in a state bill, is expected to be reinstated by next year, according to John P. Wornom, who discussed the street light problem with fellow members of the town trustees Monday.

The street lights were turned off last week because of a feud between the trustees and the York County Board of Supervisors, but were turned back on when Mr. and Mrs. Nick Mathews, owners of Nick's Seafood Pavilion, accepted the responsibility of paying the light bill.

Wornom pointed out that the trustees came to the aid of the county when it ran out of money in the building of the courthouse in 1955, and donated \$5,500 for the purchase of furniture for the structure.

He said this is in contrast to the failure of the county to aid the town in the street light problem.

The trustees have been paying the light bill with the ABC funds, but these were cut off when the last census did not provide a separate population for Yorktown, the basis upon which the funds are paid.

Wornom pointed out that a mistake was made in a bill put through the legislature by Del. Russell Carneal, with the data of the founding of Yorktown stated as 1620, instead of 1692.

He said that Carneal has promised to introduce another bill to correct the mistake and that the payment of ABC funds probably will be reinstated by July next year. This will mean a loss of about two and one-half years in funds.

Wornom said that the first street lights in Yorktown were not paid by the trustees, but were financed by the board of supervisors. The board in the 1920's authorized six street lights for Yorktown out of the county funds, he claimed.

The town, he said has been getting ABC funds since the state began the distribution system, on a per capita basis, in 1934 to various localities on an annual basis. When told that funds were forthcoming the trustees offered to assume the responsibility of paying for Yorktown's street light out of ABC funds, he said.

When the town was unable to get the ABC funds reinstated after the bill was approved by the General Assembly, with the erroneous date, the trustees voted to no longer pay for the street lights and informed the board of supervisors of this by letter.

Wornom said the street light bill was paid to the Virginia Electric and Power Company through June — \$371 for seven months.

He said the county knew of the town's dilemma and quoted York County Administrator William P. Larew as saying, sometime back, that putting a bill through the legislature was unnecessary because the county could appropriate the ABC funds back to Yorktown to straighten out the situation. He said he told Larew this would cause problems with other areas of the county also wanting similar funds. He said this was the reason he requested the bill be passed through the legislature.

In answer to claims that trustees have plenty of money — \$31,979 as of July — he enumerated the bills which have been met by the town group, including paving the commons parking area, beach cleanup and pier repair, and pointed out that heavy repairs no doubt will be needed to the town-owned pier in the future and that it is necessary to accumulate funds for this responsibility.

Trustee Tom Gillis, expressing strong concern over the street light situation, said he feels the whole affair occurred because of a lack of communication.

"We need communication with the board of supervisors, especially with the Bicentennial observance coming in the future," he said.

It was claimed that the county has shown no written response to the trustees' letters about not paying for the street lights because of the cutoff in ABC funds. Wornom noted that he has observed in reports of board of supervisors meetings that Larew was directed to meet with the trustees on the matter, but Larew has never attended a trustees meeting, nor discussed the situation with them.

The trustees indicated they will fight to the bitter end any plan to move the courthouse from Yorktown, as recently suggested by Larew, and Wornom said he thinks a referendum would have to be held before the court house can be moved.

Edgar Glover of Tabb told the group he has appealed to legislators in the street light affair, as well as to ask for aid in keeping the courthouse in Yorktown.

Gillis was requested to explore the possibility of creating a town flag, which business firms could display during the celebration years. He commented that the county has not responded to an offer of the trustees for county flags.

"I would love to have a county flag if any were available," Gillis said.

In other action, the trustees ordered its bonds removed from the safe in the County Clerk's office to a safety deposit box.

*Mrs Jennie Hallaway is a trustee.  
Mrs Edith Elliott is in clerk's office  
Mr Tom Gillis —  
Mrs Mary Mathews —  
John Wornom ?*

## DIALOGUE

## Dr. H. M. Stryker

Henry M. Stryker was born in Grove, a few miles outside of Williamsburg in James City County. He went to William and Mary Academy, the College of William and Mary, and was graduated from the Medical College of Virginia's school of dentistry in 1919. Since 1919, he has made his home in Williamsburg, practicing dentistry and politics. He became a member of City Council in 1933 and was reelected every time he ran until he retired from Council in 1968. He was mayor from 1948 to 1968 and also served as a trustee of Colonial Williamsburg, 1952-66. He has been president of the Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce, a director of the

Jamestown Corporation, president of the Virginia Peninsula Rose Association and member of the vestry at Bruton Parish Church. Now in his 76th year, he has dined with U.S. Presidents Woodrow Wilson, Calvin Coolidge, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower, and has welcomed many of the world's rulers to Williamsburg. He is married to the former Fannie Lou Gill of Roanoke. They have one daughter, Mrs. H. A. Peyton. Mrs. Stryker was one of the first hostesses hired by Colonial Williamsburg, and was senior hostess when she retired after 31 years of service. Dr. Stryker closed his dental office in 1970, after 51 years.



H.M. STRYKER  
DENTIST

HOURS  
9 - 12  
2 - 5

Dr. H.M. "Polly" Stryker closed his dental office in November, 1970, after 51 years of practicing in Williamsburg. The affable gentleman, also a famed raconteur and politician, now devotes his time to a slower-paced way of living, which includes time for running errands for Mrs. Stryker, working on his prize-winning roses and chatting with friends and neighbors.

**Question:** What was that old Williamsburg like, the sleepy little town which existed before John D. Rockefeller Jr. began the project in 1917 to restore it to its 18th century appearance?

Dr. Stryker: The downtown area of Williamsburg in those days was strung out from the College of William and Mary to where the reconstructed Capitol now stands. Stores, banks, rooming houses and meat markets were in and around old buildings left over from the 18th century. They used to say Duke of Gloucester Street was one mile long, 100 feet wide and one foot deep. The street was so dusty in summer that when Mrs. Spencer's rooster chased Mrs. Filbates' hen across the road, it raised such a cloud of dust you couldn't see the other side for 30 minutes. And then there was the terrible winter of 1918. A car got stuck in the mud in front of the drugstore at Christmas time. Next April, it was still there.

Our pleasures were simple and our wants were few. We could always amuse ourselves. We spent a lot of time talking. We played "500," a game sort of like bridge. In spring, we made wooden whistles from tree branches. We had a 'downtown' baseball team and an 'uptown' baseball team, and we feuded all the summer. A little later on, in the early days of the restoration, we had four big teams, including Magruder, Norge, Williamsburg and Toano, and they were quite fascinating to the local inhabitants. The games usually ended in fights between the players.

We always inaugurated the swimming season by going down to Jamestown on Jamestown Day, May 14, and taking a dip in the James River. Two other bachelor friends and I used to go in the telephone office at night. After 10 o'clock there weren't any calls, so we would sit there and chat with the lady operators in Hampton and Newport News. We used to go down to Buckroe Beach once a summer on the train, and we planned to meet this telephone operator there one day, which we did. We were having such a good time we decided not to take the afternoon train back, and they sent me to the telegraph office to wire our parents saying we had missed the train.

I didn't know they included in the telegrams the time you sent it, and next day when I returned poppa met me. On the way home in the buggy he said, 'Next time you miss a train, don't send the telegram until after the train has left.' The train left at 4 p.m., and I sent the telegram at 2 p.m., so I learned a good lesson from that!

Williamsburg was a country town: the farmers brought their produce in town in spring, summer and fall and sold it. Just about anything people needed, somebody would furnish it. And if one person seemed to be making a little money, somebody else would open up and sell the same thing.

People thought nothing of walking five or ten miles. In the early days, there were only three automobiles in town. There was a livery stable and you could hire a carriage and horse if you had a long way to go.

One year we forgot to hold an election here. Somebody thought of it about noon on election day and tried to get the ballots printed but the law said the ballots had to be prepared two days before an election. So nothing more was done about it. I guess the reason they forgot was because none of the candidates had time to get out so they just went on serving till

didn't Williamsburg turn into a boom town in 1917 when a big plant opened at Penniman to manufacture munitions for World War I?

Dr. Stryker: Yes, Penniman — where Cheatham Annex is now — was a town of 8,000 to 10,000 people, and it was the first time there was any money, of any consequence, around here. There was work for everybody, men and women, and spending was so steady that the drugstore used to stay open all night, never closing. Some kind of ingredient in the powder made all the workers turn yellow: the women were affected more than the men but didn't seem to mind because of the money.

One unfortunate man fell into the acid vat down there and disintegrated before they could get him out. When a local fellow went down to get a job, they asked, 'In case of accident, where do you want your body sent?' He looked around and said, 'Don't worry about that. I'll take it along with me now.' He was the only man who didn't get a job there. After the war was over and the ammunition was no longer needed, the plant closed down.

**Question:** What was the next big excitement in Williamsburg?

Dr. Stryker: That was in 1927, when Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin, who had been rector at Bruton Parish Church, started buying up property in Williamsburg. In one day, he purchased all the real estate listed for sale here. Everybody wanted to know where the preacher got all that money. He kept on

buying, and excitement mounted week by week, as cost of property increased. We asked Dr. Goodwin a lot of questions but he just laughed and said, 'You'll find out the answers soon.' Then the announcement came that he was buying property for John D. Rockefeller Jr., who at Dr. Goodwin's insistence, was going to preserve and restore some of the old buildings in Williamsburg, 'that the future may learn from the past.'

Some people didn't want the town to change and they objected. Others liked the idea of having some money. We used to gather at the drugstore then to talk about what was happening and to pass judgment on whether any good would come of it. To me, the peoples' feeling were best summed up by two residents. One, a maiden lady, sold her property to the restoration with life rights, and said now she had enough money to have her gall bladder drained and to buy some new pink bloomers. Another said, 'I've been around here a long time and I know that since Dr. Goodwin began buying property around here, it's the only cash money I've seen since I've been here.'

I don't suppose there was more than \$300 cash here in the pre-restoration days, and the same people who paid that out on a Saturday got it all back by the next Saturday. Then it started around again, and everybody in town probably had their hands on it in the course of a week. You may get the impression that the Williamsburg of many years ago was pretty well run down, and by comparison with today, that may be so. But I feel in all fairness to that period, I should point out that pictures or words can't do justice to the gentle people who used to live here then—their hospitality, their friendliness, their good manners and their agreeable social life. I believe there was no place in Virginia quite like it. And I know that no small town ever had as many characters as this one. It was a pleasant way of life.

note  
←

I was the only dentist in town for about 15 years and I worked harder then than I ever have since. I charged 50 cents for a tooth extraction way back then. I'll never forget a lady from Norge who walked in one day and asked what I charged to take out a tooth. I said 50 cents, and she inquired what it would be without the painkiller. I said for anybody that crazy, I'd do it for nothing. So she sat down in the chair and said: 'Start!' I took out 26 teeth for her free, and then she had the nerve to go to Richmond to have the plates made!

**Question: You served on the City Council for 35 years, and for mayor as 20 of those years. What were your best experiences as mayor of an historic city?**

Dr. Stryker: I would say, offhand, the most enjoyable experiences I had as mayor were the people I met. And there were a lot of them. I don't

know how many hundreds of times I welcomed people to Williamsburg. If I had kept a diary and hired myself a writer, I could probably have published a book on it. But I never thought about it. I could see what the restoration was meaning to the town and the benefits that the town as a whole was getting, but it never entered my mind to try to get any personal gain from it.

I guess one of the most fascinating people I met was Winston Churchill, who was the recipient in 1955 of the Williamsburg Award. We went to England just before Christmas for that presentation ceremony. I enjoyed meeting Queen Elizabeth and the Queen Mother when they came to Williamsburg. I think without a doubt that the Queen Mother was one of the most delightful persons I've ever seen. Fannie Lou (Mrs. Stryker) was worried about what I was going to say to the Queen Mother, but I've never yet had any trouble talking to a lady. She was a delightful, no put-on, no stiffness, plain as an old shoe.

Another one I remember pleasantly was the Queen of Thailand, a green-eyed beauty. The ugliest memory was the King of Morocco, one I'd never want to see again. Tito, the ruler of Yugoslavia, was a delightful conversationalist, always joking. We were riding around Williamsburg in a landau with Carl Humelsine, president of Colonial Williamsburg, and Carl told old Tito the carriage cost \$35,000 to make. 'Whv.' Tito said. 'You could have gotten five Cadillacs for that.' Tito invited me to come over to Yugoslavia and go hunting in the mountains with him and Nikita Khrushchev, dictator of Russia then. I said, 'No, you'll never get me up in the mountains with you and Khrushchev.' I thought Tito was the nicest dictator you could find anywhere.

**Question: After nearly 48 years of the restoration in Williamsburg, what is your opinion of its effect on the town?**

Dr. Stryker: My feeling is that the changes I have seen have been for the better. Not even Dr. Goodwin could have foreseen the phenomenal growth of Williamsburg, but the things he told us have come true. He said that a restored Williamsburg would attract the highest type of people and he was right. All of us have enjoyed benefits from this project, not only materially and culturally, but spiritually. After living here over 55 years, I am firmly convinced that if those who follow us are to continue to enjoy and benefit as we have from the restored Williamsburg, then we must guard zealously three things:

First, the unusual appeal of this historic place which is our birthright in a nation dedicated to freedom and liberty. The events that took place here could not and did not happen anywhere else!

Second, the beauty of its simple architecture, its open spaces and a tranquility that appeals so strongly to visitors from big cities of steel and concrete.

Third, the most unique interpretation of history to be found anywhere in the world of travel, which all who meet the public strive diligently to maintain.

We who live here in Williamsburg are merely trustees of it. If we believe in what this was created for and if we have benefited from it ourselves, then it's up to us to pass that on, so the younger people who come after us will appreciate it like we appreciate it. So it doesn't belong to us, it belongs to what it has meant to the people who have been attracted here. And in order to keep that going, we've got to stand up for what we think is right, regardless of how unpopular it may be, and not let anything come here which would not add to Williamsburg's heritage.

Sooner or later there's going to come a time when there'll be none of us left who knew Williamsburg as it was 60 years ago; they'll just know Williamsburg as it is today, and I'm afraid when that time comes, maybe the standards will have been dropped.

**Question: How can Williamsburg be improved, in your opinion?**

Dr. Stryker: I doubt Colonial Williamsburg can be improved, but I think they should adopt a policy of limiting the number of people who can go through the restoration in a day. If only 3,500 people can get through the buildings in a normal day, then don't sell more than 3,500 tickets. Financially, that might be a loss, I don't know. But there's no way in the world to control the huge crowds of people in the summertime. You can't make them take a vacation when it suits us here.

But you see the long lines of people waiting to get in, and some of the buildings can only accommodate 14 or 15 at a time. I took a day off last year and went through all the Colonial Williamsburg buildings, and I was worn out when I got home, after waiting in those lines. The folks were in a grand humor, standing there in the hot sun, but it's bound to have an effect on the quality of their visit. It's possible that the restoration could get too big, and I'm fearful sometimes that it already has. I personally feel that the number of people shown Colonial Williamsburg like it was intended to be shown is determined by the size and capacity of the buildings.

**Question: What do you think about the recent influx of new motels, new shopping centers and new industry in the Williamsburg area?**

Stryker: There's too many motels in Williamsburg and somebody's going broke before long. The more motels they put up, the more people come here, and the worse the traffic gets. If you try to buy some land around here now, you'll find you can buy the U.S. Mint cheaper!

I'm convinced that only one thing is going to solve the traffic problem, and that is massive public transportation, with parking areas outside of town where people can leave their cars and be bused in a regular shuttle system. We need more traffic lights to regulate traffic flow: one by the post office, another at the corner of Francis and England Streets near the Williamsburg Lodge. The traffic lights by the A&P Store on Lafayette Street, at Carv Field on Richmond Road, and at the shopping center on Richmond Road need resynchronization.

Builders here want to put up high-rise buildings but I hope it never comes to that.

If the men and women who succeed us in this privileged place are to enjoy it as they should, we of this time must guard against anything which would mar or detract from precious aspects of our city, and of the experience which it is able to share with visitors from all over the world.

I'm afraid Route 60Z west to Toano is going to be solidly business soon, but I suppose there's no way to stop it. I think Williamsburg, Jamestown and Yorktown should have had protective zoning, federally, years ago to have kept the area unspoiled, but it's gone now.

**Question:** Since you are retired both from politics and from dentistry, how do you spend your days now?

Dr. Stryker: Well, I get up every morning like I always did. I run errands for Fannie Lou. I fool with my roses in the back yard: yesterday I worked from 9:30 a.m. until about 3:30 p.m. on them. I go to town twice a day and see right many people. I fiddle around, and time just flies.

My wife still feeds me three good meals a day and I take a nap after lunch. I read some. I get along all right except for night driving. The lights on the other cars seem to jump and dazzle me. I asked the doctor last time I went up to Richmond if there's any way to get contact lenses like dark glasses but he said they wouldn't do what I wanted them to do. So I miss getting out at night, and don't go out as much as I'd like to. Other than that, I'm getting along fine.

# Shellfish Industry Opposes Dredging At Bennett's Creek

By ROBERT GRAVES  
Staff Reporter

YORKTOWN — If the state permits dredging of canals in Bennett's Creek it will have far-reaching detrimental effects for the shellfish industry, Roy C. Insley Jr., secretary-treasurer of the Chesapeake Bay Watermen's Union, claimed at a hearing Thursday held by the State Water Control Board.

The hearing, it was explained, was for the purpose of receiving testimony concerning the effect of dredging on the water quality of Ben-

nett's Creek, including two proposals to dredge canals.

Insley said he was not appearing as a member of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, but as a representative of the watermen's union.

"This is not just a matter of possibly destroying someone's oyster grounds, this will have an effect on the entire industry," Insley told the SWCB staff conducting the hearing.

He said the creek is valuable because it is one of the few remaining areas where clammers can bring their polluted clams from condemned areas and plant them for cleansing.

"It provides support for over a half of the clammers in Virginia, providing them a place to cleanse their clams," he contended.

He made a formal request for a public hearing before the entire membership of the water control board, asserting that the matter was of enough importance to warrant their personal attention.

The seafood industry has its back to the wall and places like Bennett's Creek represent its "last stand," he claimed.

He said there are from 40 to 50 clammers who make wages from Bennett's Creek. He pointed to the increasing loss of areas through condemnation.

"One-fifth of the nation's shellfish grounds are condemned and this is an accelerating problem. Development along this creek will sooner or later make the taking of shellfish here impossible."

Insley told of how watermen fought the establishment of the James River Sewage Treatment plant and how the operation of the facility resulted in condemnation of a

large area so watermen had to retreat elsewhere to places such as Bennett's Creek, in Poquoson.

"At some point, gentlemen, we have some rights too," he said. "The shellfish industry has no where else to go."

While the hearing was held to hear about the effects of any dredging in Bennett's Creek, it was noted that two projects have already been proposed.

One proposed by Ashby G. Lawson, husband of Poquoson council member Mrs. Barbara Lawson, would entail building a canal off North Lawson Road, approximately 975 feet long and 50 feet wide, to create waterfront lots on a 60-acre tract, with 18,000 cubic yards of dredged material deposited on marsh and high ground. This project drew heavy fire at the hearing from a number of Poquoson residents, including watermen who feared it would affect their livelihood.

The second project, proposed by a firm called KLPS, calls for a six-acre development and would include dragline dredging of 8,000 cubic yards of material from a 50-foot wide area along the creek at the end of Poplar Drive. Two channels, each 50 feet wide, are also proposed. This project, it was noted, has been turned down by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission.

It was explained by A. L.

Balderson, SWCB pollution specialist, that the projects would require certificates of assurance that such activities will be conducted in a manner which will not violate applicable water quality standards.

Hayden Ross-Clunis Jr. urged the SWCB staff not to take a narrow, myopic view of the projects, considering only the effects of dredging on the creek, since one action such as dredging sets off a chain of activity which would mean the development and pollution of the creek area. The end result of development, including the future sewage problems, should also be considered, he said.

He had been reminded by Balderson that the hearing was being held only in regard to requirements for certificates of assurance in regard to dredging.

Ross-Clunis was supported in his view by Charles R. Burbach, state review officer of the division of state planning and community affairs, operating from the governor's office, who said the wide view is necessary in determining the effect of a project.

"All aspects of a project should be examined and this is one of the functions of my office," he said.

Burbach said the bay is becoming a dumping ground, terming the situation "terrible."

Hearing officers noted that a petition signed by 240 per-

sons opposing the Lawson project had been registered with the board. D. Wayne Moore, attorney representing Lawson, presented a petition containing 300 names of people who do not oppose the project.

Insley countered with another petition of 105 names of people opposing Lawson's application.

"I didn't think we would need these additional names," he commented.

Moore said that Lawson's current intention is to develop the facilities for personal use.

"Any subdivision would occur after public sewage service is available," he said.

Martin Menges and Henry Elkanin urged that the board not permit any dredging which would lower the quality of the water in the creek, or result in further condemnation of waters here.

Attorney James Insley directed the presentation of a number of witnesses testifying in opposition to the dredging proposals.

Among those testifying were Mrs. Frances Firth, wife of a waterman; Dr. Gerald Johnson, geologist from the College of William and Mary; George E. Firth and James Firth, watermen; E. H. Hunt, seafood dealer and waterman and Miss Iris Anderson, microbiologist.

The SWCB staff was urged to consider not only the immediate effects of dredging.

but also the long-range impact upon the creek, marshes and surrounding area.

Dr. Johnson, who did the geologic mapping of the creek and has been working on erosion problems for state agencies, said there have been sediment problems in the creek.

"When you dredge these channels, you create a major problem," he said. The result, he said, will be extensive erosion of the banks from wave action from tides and boats, undercutting the banks and placing sediment on oyster beds.

"We are shortsighted in not looking at the long term ef-

fects of these projects," he said.

George and James Firth testified on the production of their oyster beds and Hunt told of planting 1.5 million clams in the creek for cleansing.

Miss Anderson said the colliform count in the creek will rise with development of the area and warned about the reduction in the marsh's filtering action with changes in the creek.

It was noted that a decision probably will not be reached for about a month. The recommendation of the committee holding the hearing will be provided to the SWCB.

## YORK AWAITS FEDERAL FUNDS

# Central Sewer Still Big Issue In '72

By ROBERT GRAVES

Staff Reporter

YORKTOWN—As the year ends, a number of big question marks remain for York County, including the future of the proposed central public sewage system for which voters approved an expenditure of \$5.5 million more than five years ago.

Last year at this time, it seemed only a matter of getting bids before issuing bonds, but a snag in obtaining federal money changed plans.

Construction of the first phase, at an estimated \$3.5 million, was delayed until a priority list for federal funds was established.

Now York is waiting for the approval of plans by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, which is now establishing guidelines.

York County Administrator William P. Larew indicated that federal and local money is lined up and if guidelines are favorable, the county may be able to move ahead with its long-delayed public sewage system for the major portion of the county.

The county for years has had a share in the sewage system serving some areas in Bruton District, although this system has become outdated.

During the final weeks of 1972, the board of supervisors moved toward implementing its fire protection master plan, authorizing the architect to call for bids on construction of the first of four substations, this one for Bethel District. A site was purchased for the fire substation and plans for the future call for establishing substations in Yorktown, Seaford and Bruton District.

Another major question centers on possible plans to relieve the space problems at the county courthouse at Yorktown.

The York County Bar Association several times during the past year has emphasized to the board the need for additional space for the courts and supporting facilities. There is

thought developing on a possible solution involving construction of administrative office facilities at another location, with courts and clerks' offices remaining at the existing courthouse. However, no concrete plans have been made.

During the year, York heard that it will receive about a quarter million dollars a year in federal funds under the revenue sharing program. The funds can be used for any legitimate governmental purpose other than education.

The completion of the four-laning of Route 134 brought a big improvement in vehicular movement in that area of the county, taking some of the load off Route 17 at Tabb.

Two major appointments were made during 1972 — the employment of Wallace Robertson as York's first fire marshal and appointment of David Pippenger as assistant county administrator to replace Charles Waddell, who became county administrator of King William County.

A federal grant of \$95,064 was available for establishing a teen probation house to help the rehabilitation of youngsters, but residents turned down numerous proposed sites for the house because they feared the affect on their neighborhoods.

This past year also saw the selection of a site in Yorktown, donated by Mr. and Mrs. Nick Mathews, for a state bicentennial victory center.

The year also brought a number of proposals for development of planned communities, some to contain apartments, townhouses and single family dwellings.

One of the planned communities would provide close to 2,500 living units and raise the population in that area by 10,000 within 10 years. To be called Canterbury, the community would be constructed along Big Bethel Reservoir between Route 134, Route 17 and Bethel Road.

Several major amendments to the zoning ordinance were adopted, including the addition of commercial-tourist and rural residential zones, although the map delineating the zones was not approved. Consideration of the map will be on the agenda for the coming year.

Supervisors also began study of an ordinance to regulate the operation of massage parlors.

The Plum Tree Island bombing range was transferred from Air Force ownership to the Department of the Interior as a game preserve.

The Virginia Electric and Power Company continued to build its \$132 million addition to the Yorktown generating station which will triple the production of power at the facility.

York Commonwealth's Attorney Robert F. Ripley Jr. and attorneys for Vepco agreed to a court decree designed to cut down on particulate emissions from the power station's smokestack. The public utility also announced its decision to convert from the use of coal and coke to an oil-fired facility to help clean up the environment. A team from the State Air Pollution Control Board has been inspecting the plant during periodic visits.

The board of supervisors gave consideration to updating the county master plan, a recommendation of the York Planning Commission, and has discussed a possible study with a consulting firm of planners.

Plans to establish a commercial FM radio station in York County were announced.

Permits were issued for establishment of several banks, including a branch of the First and Merchants and a new facility, Dominion Bank.

An extensive junk auto cleanup supervised by code enforcement officer Richard Elliott yielded a collection of 800 junked cars. The cleanup was held with the assistance of a unit from Fort Eustis.

The county approved a wetlands ordinance and appointed a commission to enforce regulations, composed of J. Elliott Thomas, Robert B. Smoot, Alvah Riggins, Robert B. McCartney and Theodore Antoniewicz.

The board of supervisors adopted an industrial development authority to help industries borrow money to finance environmental protection facilities.

The master plan for Patrick Henry Airport was approved after a controversial public hearing in which residents complained of airport noise and the fear of it increasing in the future.



Mrs. Charles Eldred, left, of Yorktown, watched her father, William L. Scott, right, sworn in as U. S. Senator this week. This photograph, taken at the victory celebration following his election in November, shows them with Mrs. Scott and Lloyd Eldred. Lloyd, 7, didn't get to see his grandfather take the oath on Wednesday because he was in school.

## Yorktown Resident Sees Father Sworn In

By TINA JEFFREY  
Daily Press Staff Writer

It's quite a thrill to see your father sworn in as a United States Senator, says Gail Scott Eldred of Yorktown.

She and her husband, Charles H. Eldred, a NASA employe, and their four-year-old son, Michael Scott, went to Washington Wednesday to see the ceremony for William L. Scott, conducted by Vice President Spiro Agnew at the opening of the 93rd Congress. They also attended a reception her parents held for loyal campaign workers.

"We weren't sure children could attend the swearing-in, so we left our older son, Lloyd, 7, in school that day," Mrs. Eldred said. "We had anticipated parking Michael with the office staff while we watched the brief ceremony,

but then it turned out that children were admitted. We were sorry we hadn't taken Lloyd too, because he kept up with the campaign and knew what it was all about. Vice President Agnew shook hands with Michael after it was all over; that was a big thrill to him because he'd heard a lot about the Vice President."

All the Scott children were on hand to witness the magic

moment when their father officially assumed his new title of U. S. Senator. Scott, former Congressman, defeated Senator William B. Spong Jr. in the November general election to win his seat in the upper as first Republican Senator from Virginia in this century. Besides Mrs. Eldred, on hand were William L. Scott Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. Paul A. Scott, so it was a real family

reunion.

At the buffet reception afterward in the caucus room of the Old Senate Office Building, about 400 supporters and party officials attended. The Scotts stood at the door about three hours to shake hands and chat with the guests, among whom were Virginia Representatives William C. Wampler, David E. Satterfield, G. William White-

hurst, and U.S. Sen. Harry F. Byrd Jr.

# Sewer Progress Highlights 1972

By ROBERT GRAVES

Staff Reporter

POQUOSON — Completion of the first phase of Poquoson's public sewage system was seen as the highlight of 1972 for the town by Town Manager George W. Dickerson.

The system, started in 1969, cost an estimated \$2 million.

Planning for the first phase began in 1966, three years before the first shovel was turned.

Dickerson said the availability of money will determine when the second phase of the system will be constructed, although extensions of the first phase have already started.

Sewer service is now being extended into the Holloway-Forrest subdivision and completion is expected by the new year.

"This has been at no direct cost to the town," Dickerson said.

"The extension will pay for itself within 15 years.

"A similar arrangement has been made for extension of sewage service down Rens Road for the White House Cove developers and Carpenter's Marina. The town will handle the administration of this, as it will the Holloway-Forrest system."

The town saw sweeping changes in administrative staff and in the political composition of town management during the past year, with the resignations of James D. Harrelson as town manager, Alva F. Hunt as mayor and John Hunt as superintendent of streets.

Dickerson was appointed town manager effective July 1. Joseph K. Bunting Jr. was elected by town council to serve as mayor to fill out Hunt's unexpired term, and John Drake was named superintendent of streets. Jonathan S. Gibson II was appointed town attorney to replace Cecil Moore.

The entire Town Planning Commission was replaced, with council naming James Holloway, chairman; Will Lawson, vice chairman; William W. Martin, Pelham Phillips and Cornell Burcher as new members.

Poquoson for the first time employed a full-time superintendent of schools, O. E. Ware, who is still seeking permanent office space for his staff, now scattered at various locations including a school board office on Poquoson Avenue and offices in the high school.

The school board changed from a three-member group to a five-member group, with new members including Howard Evans, P. R. Moore and Eugene Hunt.

Prior to Ware's appointment, Poquoson shared a superintendent with York County.

There were no key changes in fire department personnel, but firemen continued to win trophies in competitions around the states — twice for

the best appearing unit. The rescue squad received honors in municipal competitions.

The four paid firemen and 45 volunteers spent their first year in the new \$60,000 firehouse which replaced inadequate quarters near Trinity Methodist Church.

Under the guidance of fire chief Jack Holloway and chief engineer Ballard Quinn, the firemen constructed a large extension of the new fire station, including a meeting room and a kitchen.

Only minor changes in personnel were noted for the police department.

Dickerson said there was a spurt in building in 1972, stimulated by the new sewerage system, with greater increases seen for the coming year. Numerous plans were made by developers for construction of apartments.

Dickerson pointed out that ultimately the town wants to make the sanitary sewage system available to every house in the town.

The Rens Road extension is due to start in January.

"The town cannot afford another load for sewage facilities, but the availability of federal grant money is being explored," the town manager said. "We need grant money to pay for the first phase. We are in financial difficulty in that the amount of revenue we anticipated has not materialized. Not enough revenue has come in to pay the bills," he said.

"We are also seeking grant money to extend the sewer system."

A wetlands commission was established to consider permits for construction and dredging in the town. Heading up the commission is Charles M. Conrad. Members include Upshur Joyner, Dr. G. Q. Freeman, George Firman and Dorothy Davis.

J. M. Watkins was appointed chairman of the Parks and Playgrounds Commission to replace Ray Himebright, who remains as a member.

Resurfacing of about 10 miles of road during the past year is regarded as a significant accomplishment, although work on streets had to stop Oct. 15 because of a state limitation.

Dickerson said plans for the coming year include an extensive improvement program for roads. Much effort has already gone into improving the larger drainage ditches and during the coming months plans include improvements to minor ditches.

A full scale attack on mosquitoes is planned.

"We are all concerned with the salt marsh mosquito during the summer months," Dickerson said. "We are planning to spend \$20,000 for the control of mosquitoes and are asking the Department of the Interior to match this sum to control mosquitoes on Plumb Tree Island."

"The town is exploring the advisability of buying swamp buggies to use for spraying mosquitoes in the marshes. We have two new fogging machines coming into our inventory from the State Mosquito Control Commission," he said.

"We have been using one old, dilapidated vehicle and an ancient fogger," he said.

Dickerson said the town wants the aerial spraying by Langley Air Force Base to continue. Youth groups will be asked to help in the program and a public works man has been hired to work with the mosquito control effort during the summer to carry out an extensive program to demonstrate to the town.

Educational literature will be provided to homeowners to get their help.

Dickerson said Poquoson will get \$54,000 as the first of two installments under the Federal Revenue sharing program.

"We hope to use some of this money to keep taxes down," he said.

"Hopefully the bulk of the money will go toward capital investments, including a building fund to provide office space for the superintendent of schools and public works.

School Superintendent Ware noted that during the year, a state building needs committee studied facilities in Poquoson and recommended, among other things, construction of a new high school to handle the increased school enrollments.

Also during the year, Poquoson High School was accredited by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges.

*over*

A kindergarten class was held for the first time in the town during the summer, with a good response noted.

"We are shooting for a full-time kindergarten program by 1974," Ware said.

A record high budget was provided for schools — \$1,126,189 — significantly higher than the previous year.

Another highpoint in the school system was establishment of the first adult education night school.

"It was so successful we had to add a third teacher," Ware said.

He noted the school system sponsors two college graduate courses for teachers at Old Dominion University, with Mrs. Anne Sager, Poquoson director of instruction, and Larry Brooks teaching them.

The Poquoson system received a federal grant of about \$16,000 for the new PREVAIL program, which provides a prevocational program for exceptional children.

"We modernized our record keeping by placing them on the centralized bookkeeping machine at town hall," Ware said.

The athletic facilities at the high school, including seating and lighting, were improved with the help of Principal James Carmines and his staff.

Ware said a full-time maintenance man was hired, which he called a step forward for the system.



Mar 27, 1973

### Carneal Presents State Flags To Poquoson Schools

Del. Russell Carneal Monday presented four state flags to the Poquoson High and Elementary schools, including one which flew over the State Capitol in Richmond. From left are: Bill Hunt, Mrs. Frances Graef,

elementary principal; School superintendent O. E. Ware, high school principal James Carmines and Tom Blackstock. Hunt and Blackstock represent the school student cooperative associations.

# Battle Lines Will Be Reconstructed At Yorktown

YORKTOWN — Reconstruction of the first and second battle lines, from which American and French artillery mercilessly pounded British troops into surrendering during the siege of Yorktown in 1781, will be one of the major development programs to prepare the Colonial National Historical Park for the nation's Bicentennial observance.

Research for the program is now under way by Charles E. Hatch Jr., research historian for the Washington office of the National Park Service, who is stationed at the Yorktown Visitors Center.

"In those days, it was always best to keep some dirt between yourself and the enemy," he said referring to the extensive fortifications and trench work accomplished by both sides.

The British under Lord Cornwallis were strongly fortified in Yorktown, while the Americans and French under command of Gen. George Washington had them completely encircled.

The British positions are pretty well delineated on the battlefield, but the portions of the French and American siege lines have not been reconstructed.

Hatch said that one of the main strongholds of the first siege line was the Grand French Battery complex, with from 30 to 35 artillery pieces trained upon the British in Yorktown.

"This was actually a series of batteries," Hatch noted.

"One part of the battery is east of the road (Route 704) and this has been reconstructed. The portion west of the road, however, has not been reconstructed.

"The battery was composed of mortars, which were on

dead mounts, and cannon and howitzers which were on carriages," he said.

Most of the Grand French Battery complex has not been rebuilt.

"No more than 20 per cent," commented Hatch.

Hatch, who has served for many years at Yorktown, feels that reconstruction of all of the siege lines is a must to show visitors how it was during the battle.

The French held positions in a line running from Yorktown Creek east to a point midway to the York River, connecting with the American Line.

Hatch is working from a number of plans showing the Yorktown Battlefield as it was during the siege, including a well detailed French map, showing both siege lines, the French artillery positions and the line of fire from each gun to its target in the British fortifications.

The anchor of the American batteries was one bordering the York River on the east end of the first siege line.

"It was from this position that Gen. Washington fired the first American artillery shot of the siege," Hatch said. Actually, the French beat the Americans by about two hours in firing the first shot, from a location west of Yorktown now known as "French Trench."

The American anchor position was located near the former superintendent's house, which is now vacant.

Hatch indicated the house may have to give way to reconstruction work in the future.

"The whole town was encircled," Hatch described the

27  
battle. "The Yorktown Creek formed a barrier through which no particular action occurred."

The siege was one which clearly showed the value of artillery.

It was artillery which brought Cornwallis to the point of surrender.

From the first siege line, the French and Americans fired salvo after salvo until they were far enough advanced in strength and firepower that they were able to move to the second siege line closer to the British.

When troops lead by Alexander Hamilton and a French officer captured two redoubts along the river, the end was in sight. The positions formed the new anchor for the second siege line, from which devastating fire poured into the British.

Cornwallis' situation was hopeless, with 552 casualties, sickness among his troops and he was hemmed in a trap from which he could not extricate himself.

"The British were outnumbered, 16,000 to about 7,500, and outgunned," Hatch pointed out. Cornwallis had stripped several gunships of artillery pieces to bolster his defenses.

An attack against the allied line failed, as did an attempt to escape across the York River to Gloucester.

"Every time the British tried to put a gun into position, American and French artillery would knock it out," Hatch said.

Hatch said that his research will be followed by work of an archeological team, which will locate each position in the lines. After this, the reconstruction work can be done.

He doesn't feel that it will be too hard to locate the positions if the area is relatively undisturbed.

"This area one day will have a key part to play interpretively for the park," he said, referring to the position where Washington ordered the first shots fired.

Hatch noted that the park's timetable is related to the appropriations from congress, but he feels the reconstruction will be ready for the beginning of the Bicentennial observance in 1976. However, the major observance of Yorktown's part in the Revolutionary War will be in 1981, the 200th anniversary of the victory at Yorktown.

Hatch explained that the Grand French Battery was composed of six parts. One of these parts has been reconstructed, but there are also four additional batteries and a redoubt, with a number of little communicating trenches so soldiers could move back and forth with some safety.

Although the Americans had a great deal of artillery, they did not have as much firepower as the French.

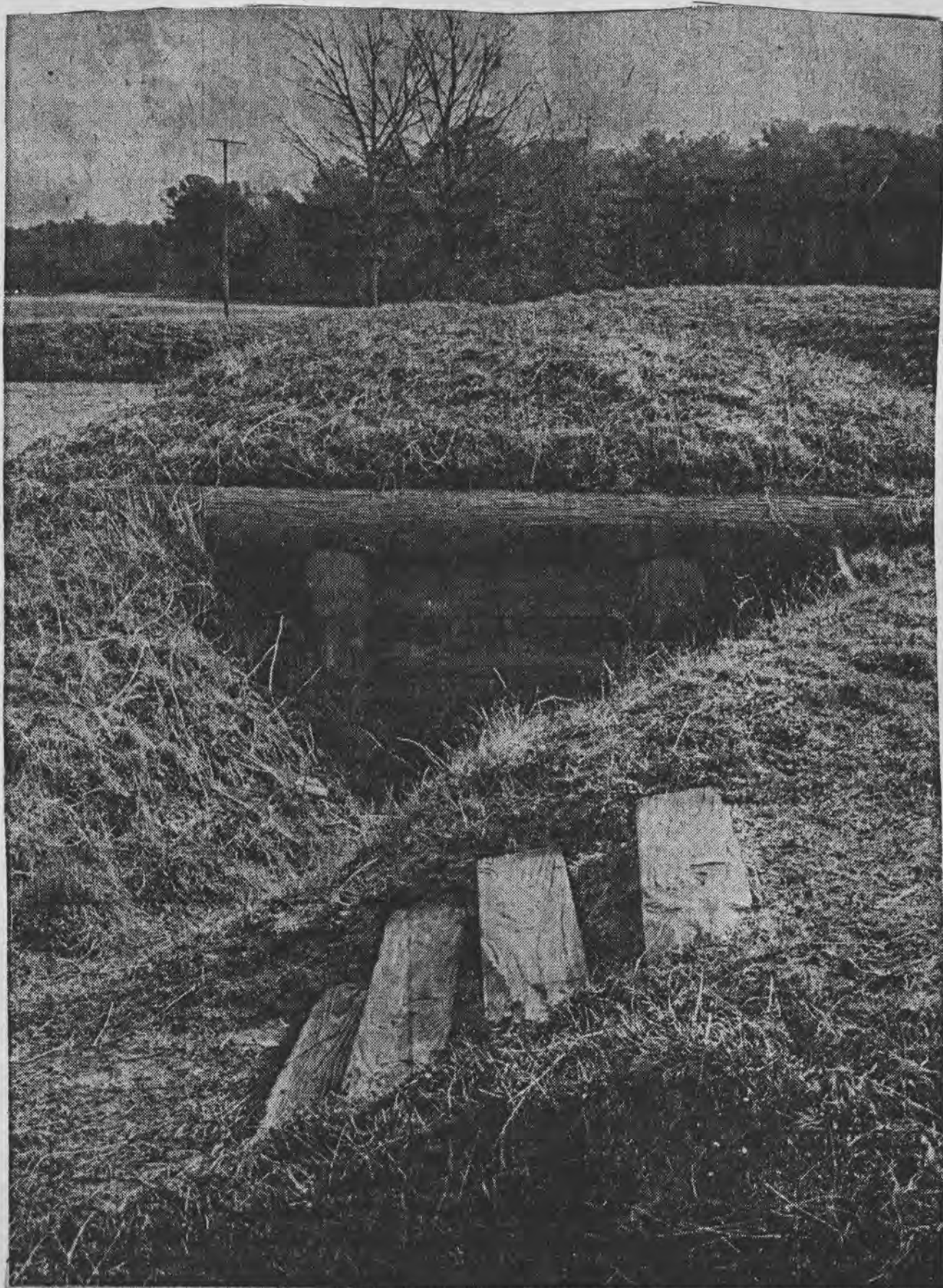
When both siege lines are reconstructed, they will stretch for about two miles. The easiest to reconstruct are the straight trenches.

"It gets expensive when you go into the complicated task of reconstructing a battery or a redoubt," Hatch said.

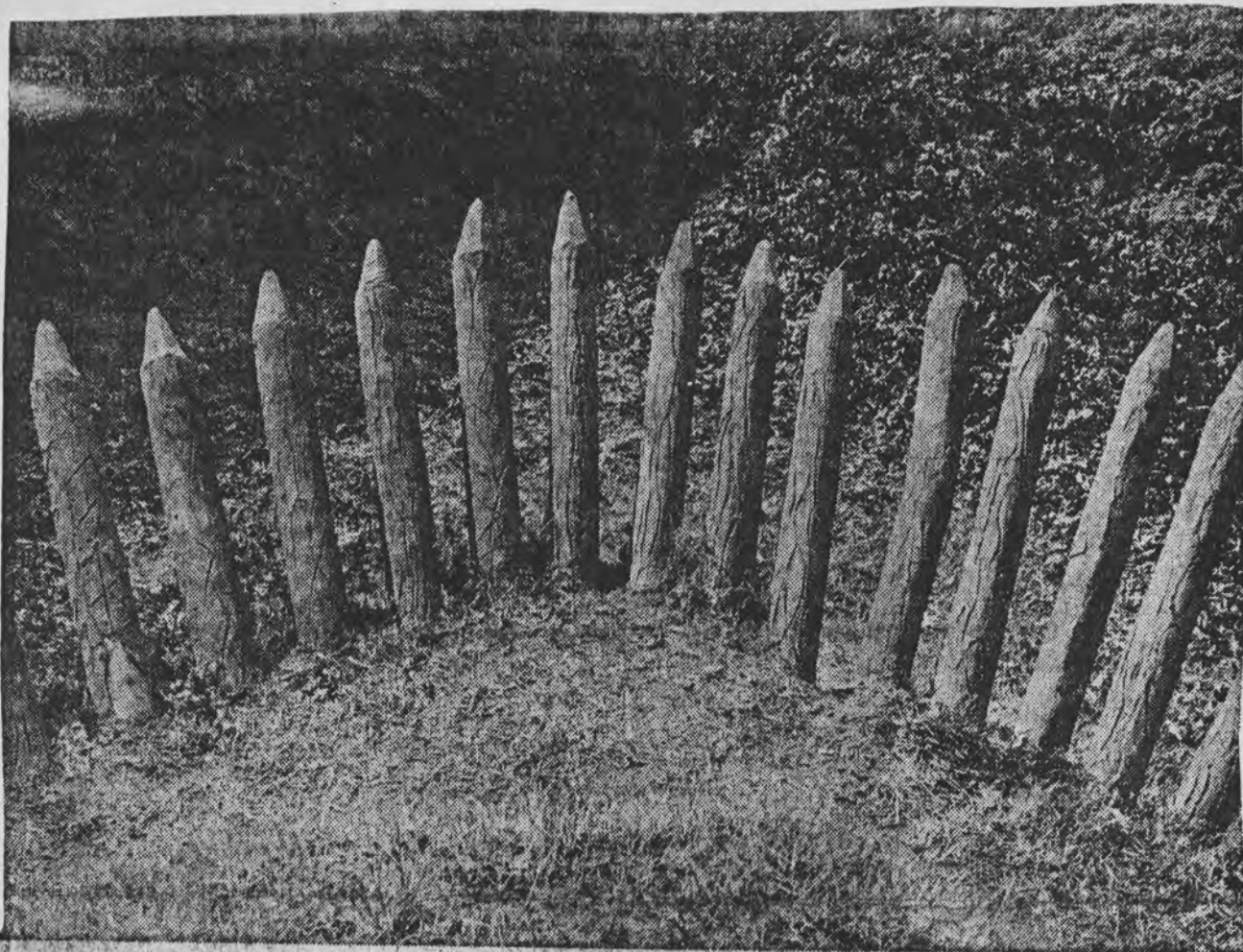
Finding the outline of the positions is not difficult, he said, explaining that by cutting into the soil and exposing the various layers, the original trench line becomes visible.

"The soil is different," he said. "The difference jumps right out at you."

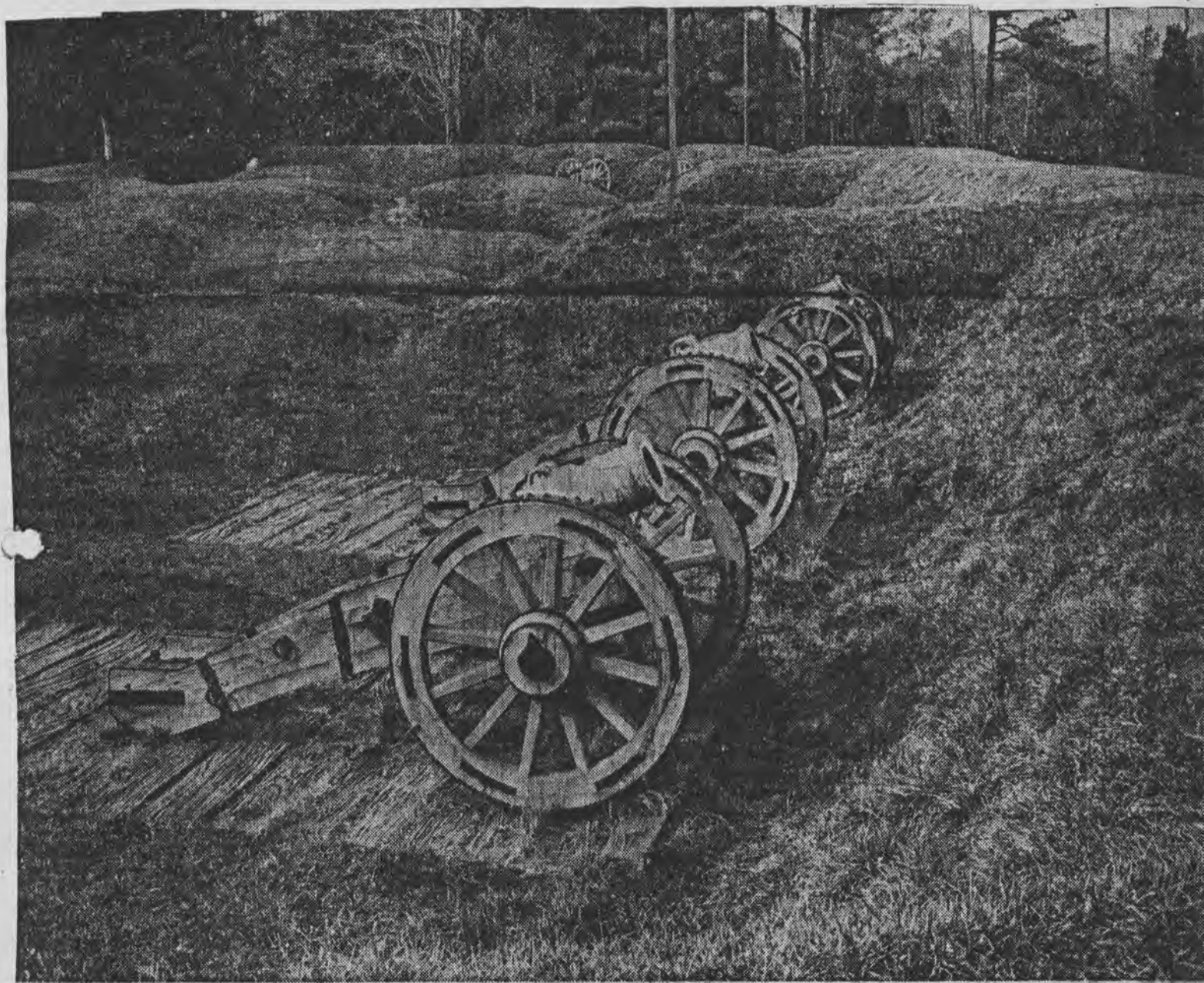
## *Story And Pictures By Robert Graves*



Explosives and munitions were kept underground in effort to protect them from enemy fire, such as in facilities like this one on the second siege line at Yorktown.



This redoubt, captured from the British by American troops led by Alexander Hamilton, formed the eastern anchor of the second siege line at Yorktown. The British surrendered shortly after the successful attack when Cornwallis realized his situation was hopeless.



The Grand French Battery poured devastating artillery fire into British positions. Only about 20 per cent has been reconstructed. Plans call for rebuilding it and other portions of the two allied siege lines in time for the Bicentennial.



mortar on allied siege line lobbed cannon balls over British fortifications, one of many which knocked out Cornwallis' artillery

# Researcher Is Studying Early Yorktown Period

87

By KATHERINE KINNIER  
Staff Reporter

YORKTOWN — Yorktown as a prosperous port city in the early part of the 18th century, is the current topic for research and study by Charles Eldridge Hatch Jr., research historian.

Hatch is a member of the historic preservation team of the National Park Service Center, Denver, Colo., but he is "domiciled" in an office provided for him by the National Park Service at its Yorktown Visitor Center.

Chief function of Hatch's department is to solve problems in research, restoration and interpretation, and to assemble and analyze study results to recommend sound, lasting decisions.

His office overlooks a sweep of the Yorktown riverfront he is presently studying. Innumerable books, pamphlets and studies which he already has completed are ranked on bookshelves for his ready reference.

During the period in Yorktown's history under Hatch's scrutiny at this time, the colonial town was a bustling harbor replete with wharves, storehouses, inns, eating and sleeping places. Yorktown was the county seat then. As such, it attracted additional visitors at court times. According to Hatch, it had "something less than 1,800 population in peak times. 'Williamsburg,' he continued, "was no more than twice that size, if that." Hatch has, in his files, pictures of a windmill which apparently did a thriving business at that time, supplying townspeople and ships' crews alike. The mill is depicted in a James Peale painting of Yorktown, which shows a meeting of the American and French generals at Yorktown following the 1781 surrender. Yorktown, "had ranked well in trade" prior to this. Hatch said, Hatch said. But went down, "size-wise", following the siege, and was supplanted as a harbor town by Norfolk,

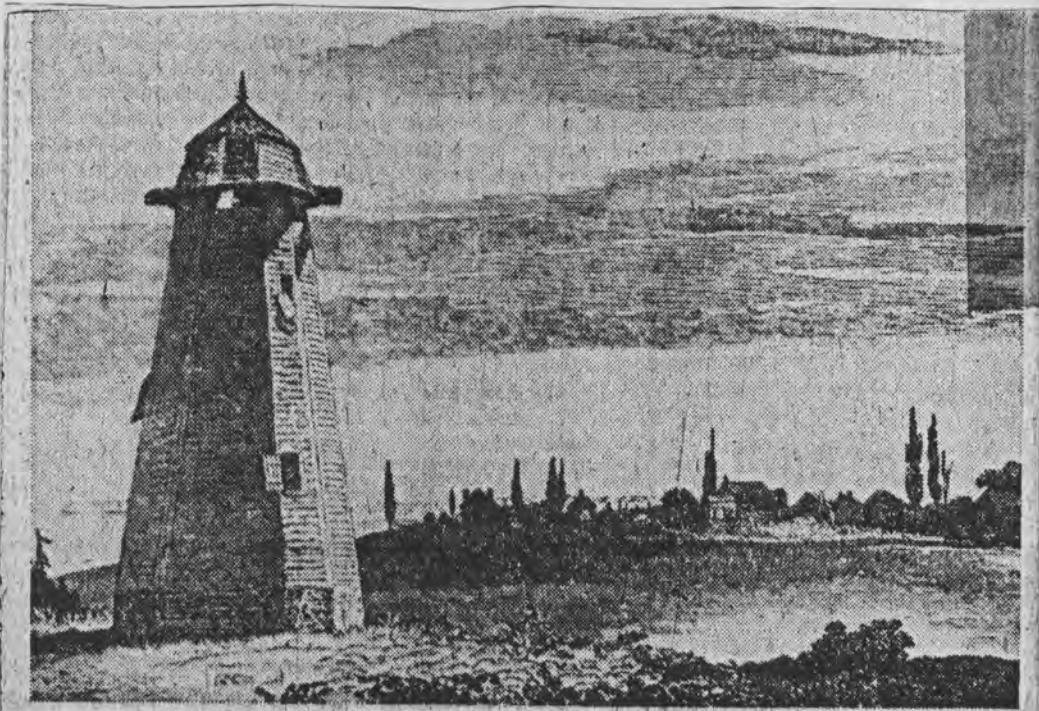
Hampton and Richmond.

Hatch's favorite topic of study is Jamestown. Among his completed studies on this town are "James Towne in the Words of Contemporaries," "Jamestown, Virginia: The Town Site and Its Story," and "The First Seventeen Years: Virginia, 1607-1624."

Hatch often gets referrals from the Park Service staff relating to topics on which he is knowledgeable, and visitors want additional information. At times, he works directly with visiting notables. "I had the good fortune," he said, "to work with Douglas Southall Freeman," when he was doing his "Life of Washington." Freeman was doing research on the siege of Yorktown, and "he wanted to walk over the batteries where the event occurred. "He was a thorough, methodical man," Hatch said.

Another time, Hatch worked with Louis Gottschalk, ranking American historian, university professor and authority on Lafayette.

The Phi Beta Kappa researcher is not cloistered at his Yorktown base. He recently made a trip to the Virgin Islands on an assignment. He has done two studies on the Revolutionary battlefields in North Carolina — the Battle of Guilford Courthouse and the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, February of 1776. He conducted a study for Shenandoah National Park in order to pinpoint the route Alexander Spotswood took over the Blue Ridge Mountains into the Shenandoah Valley during See Early Yorktown, Pg. F3, Col. 1



The Old Windmill at Yorktown

March 4, 1973

# Early Yorktown Period

Continued From Page F2

Virginia's expansion movement to the west.

Hatch was born at Cobb's Creek, Mathews County. He attended Cobbs Creek Elementary and High School, where, in 1931, he received his

diploma and was granted the yearly school award for scholarship, loyalty and achievement. He received a B.A. degree from The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, and an M.A. degree from the University of

Virginia, Charlottesville. At the latter school, he was granted a DuPont Research Fellowship in History. Following this, he worked at Washington's birthplace, Pope's Creek Plantation, Westmoreland County, apart of the park service.



CHARLES E. HATCH, Jr.

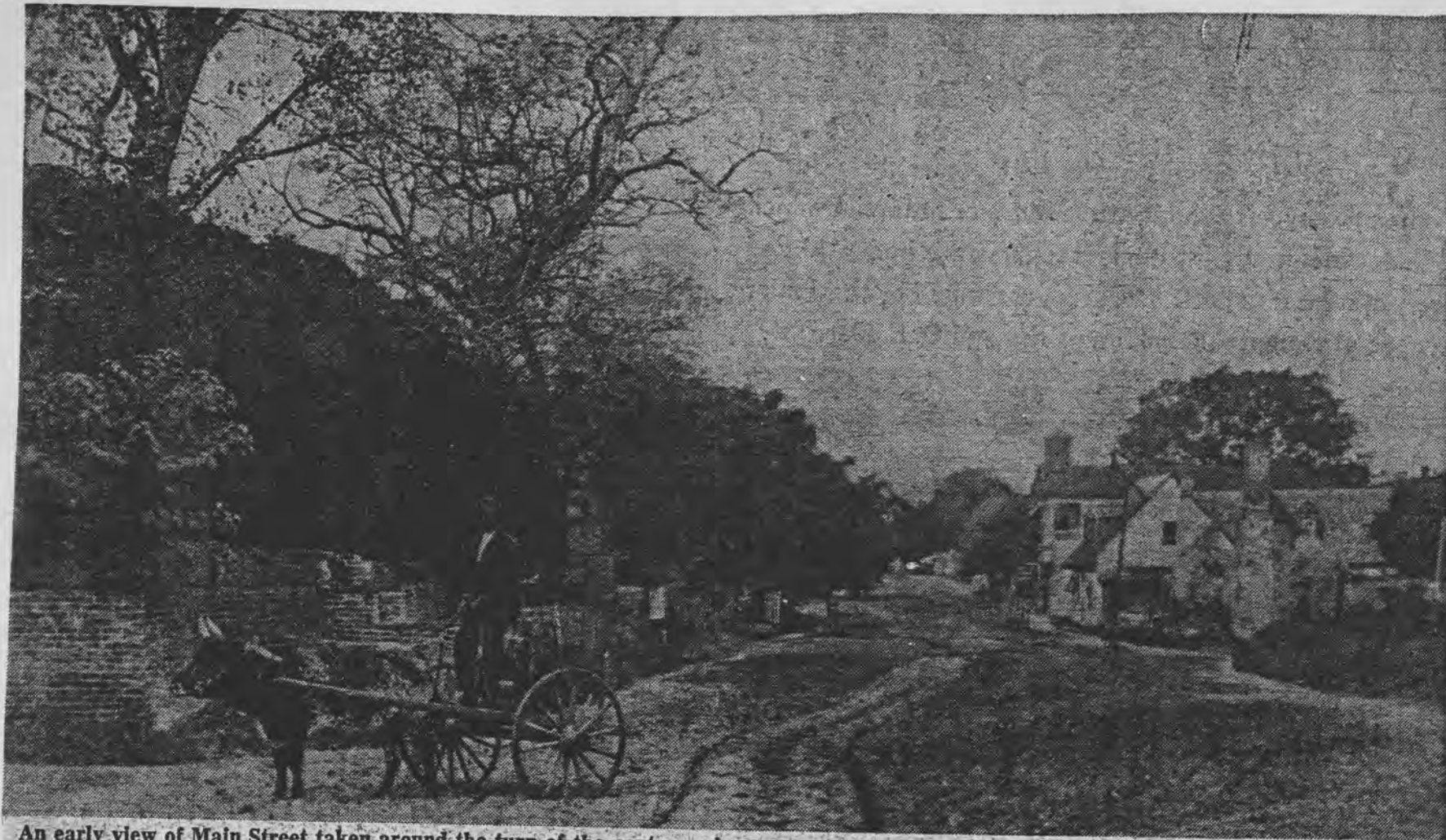
Hatch belongs to a number of civic and educational bodies. In addition, he holds membership in the American Historical Association, the Southern Historical Association, the American Association of State and Local History, the Virginia Historical Society and the Order of Cape Henry, 1607. He is a life member of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and a member of the Eastern National Park and Monument Association, by which latter organization he was granted a Distinguished Service Award in 1963.

Hatch served his country during World War II, first as a member of the Air Corps, in 1944, and, upon transfer, as a member of the Army, in 1945 and 1946. Because of the superior quality of his service, he was a recipient of the Army Commendation Award. While stationed in Germany, he attended the University of Heidelberg.

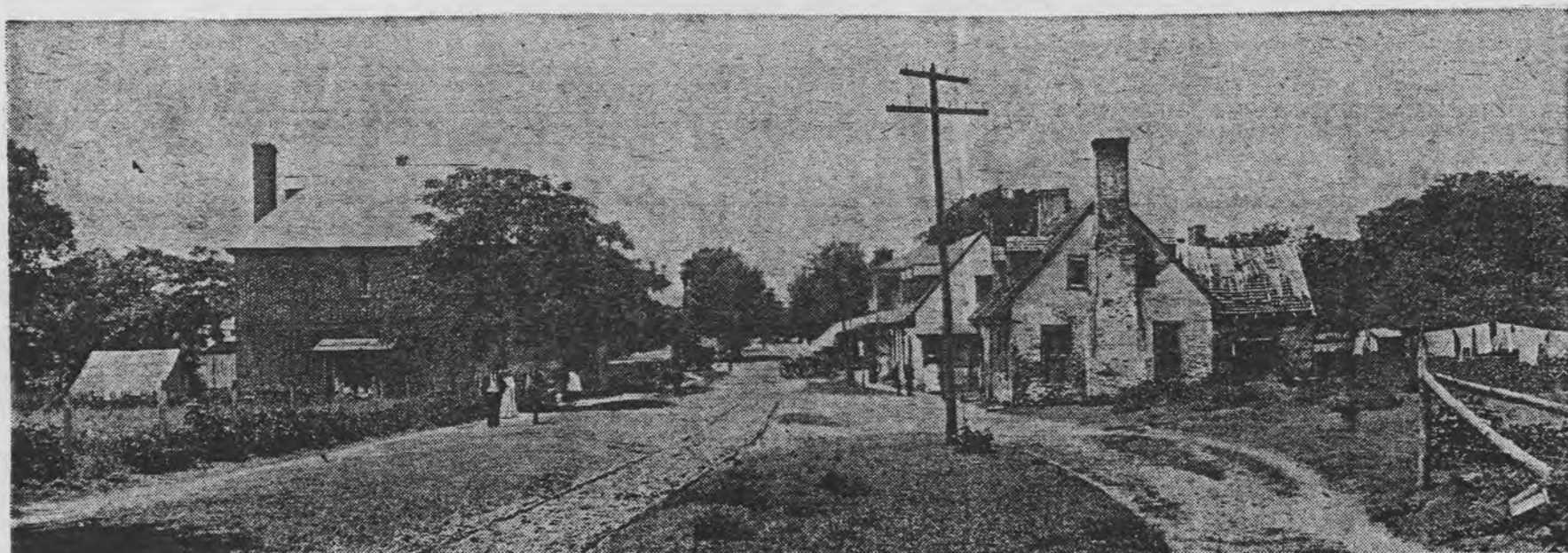
Hatch is listed in "Virginia Lives, The Old Dominion Who's Who" by Richard Lee Morton of Williamsburg, and in "Virginia Authors Past and Present" by Welford Dunaway Taylor.



Yorktown's Main Street about 1886  
(Photo by ...)



An early view of Main Street taken around the turn of the century when ox carts were not uncommon on Yorktown's principal thoroughfares. The intersection at the left foreground is where Nelson St. joins Main St. The brick work on the left forms part of the wall surrounding historic Nelson House, Cornwallis' headquarters in 1781. National Park Service photo.



Grass grew in the streets of Yorktown in the not too remote past. This pastoral view of Main Street was taken by Cheyne's Studio, Hampton, around the turn of the century. Customhouse is on the left.

# Willard Gilley Takes A Backward Look To Williamsburg At The Turn Of Century

By Willard Gilley

Several weeks ago your writer, Ada Stuart Holland, had a story in the Gazette concerning a little newspaper called the Sunday Morning Sun. I recall seeing a great many copies of this little newspaper which was about the size of a sheet of typewriter paper folded once in the middle. It was published once a week by Mr. H. Bent Bryant who said his real name was Hezekiah Benton Bryant, though he called himself "Hell Bent" Bryant. He was an unusual man, a real livewire and full of life. He was rather short, probably not more than five feet, six inches tall. He had a son, F. G. F. Bryant, and a daughter, Mrs. J. L. Garrett, and several of his grandchildren reside in this area yet.

I knew very well a great many of the people mentioned from time to time in the Sunday Morning Sun, including Mr. and Mrs. L. B. Tuttle. Mr. Tuttle was a fisherman and I recall that when we came to Virginia in 1905, he and his family lived down on the James River on what is now the James City County Bible and Agriculture Training School Farm. They lived on a part that had been sold off and was called Port Arthur. I recall Mrs. Tuttle whose maiden name was Julia Falana and who was Cuban, as a very kind lady. The Tuttle had one child, their son, Will Tuttle, who married Teresa Macky. The Will Tuttle were the parents of a little girl, mentioned many times in the Sunday Morning Sun, who died when she was about three or four years old.



Willard Gilley, in his special armchair at his home on Stanley Drive, looks at some of his mementos.

The son, Will, died very suddenly; his wife woke up one morning and found him dead. Will and Teresa's son, William L. Tuttle, was about a year old at the time of his father's death. He lived around here a good many years and passed away in 1964. So far as I know, there are no direct descendants of Mr. and Mrs. L. B. Tuttle.

The elder Mr. Tuttle was known as Burr by some people, and he said he was a descendant of Aaron Burr who killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. Occasionally a Negro man who worked for him sticking net poles and the like would refer

to him as Mr. Tuttely. Mr. Tuttle was an unusual character. He was tough.

## 'Over To Claremont'

Fishermen generally are a pretty sturdy bunch anyway, but I remember a story they told on Mr. Tuttle. He went barefoot all summer except when he might say one morning, "Well, begod, I think I'll go over to Claremont today." Well, now, that would be pretty easy these days, but then it meant rowing a boat over there. It must have been close to ten miles in a beeline, but Mr. Tuttle didn't think anything about it. So his niece and his daughter-in-law, who lived with them after her husband died, would get the old man cleaned up and get his shoes on him and he'd go down and pull his boat ashore. He kept it tied to a rope that had a pulley arrangement on it so it could be pulled out in the river and the waves wouldn't beat it up on the shore. He would get in his boat, pull her out in the river a little ways, untie her from the pulley arrangement, sit down and take off his shoes and set them on the seat beside him, and set out to row over to Claremont. I've heard about these trips a good many times.

I'd heard of diamond back terrapins, but Mr. Tuttle had the only diamond back terrapins that I ever saw. He had them in a pen down there on his Port Arthur farm. The Port Arthur buildings stood very close to where the amusement park is now. The

whole farm down there at that time was called Spratley's and the lower end of it was always referred to as Archer's Hope. I believe there's a sign along the Parkway now that mentions Archer's Hope.

#### Sturgeon Fishing

We had a great many interesting people around here at that time. Some of them were fishermen. Captain George Waltrip was one. Captain George in his younger days had been a sturgeon fisherman, and at the time we came here in 1905, every summer sturgeon boats put out and fished in the river. The method was to go over to a certain point (and of course they respected each other's territorial rights), they would spread those nets out across the current, and then they would watch for the floats on the nets to bob. I've seen sturgeon brought ashore on the old wharf at Jamestown. That, of course, was torn down many years ago.

In those days there was a great deal of commercial fishing in this area, and the old sidewheel steamer Pocahontas would go up the river one day and back the next. It laid over on Sundays, of course. Most of the fishermen had ice boxes on the old pier at Jamestown and the steamer would bring ice up there in 300-pound blocks. They had pulleys and would put it into these boxes and keep it to pack their fish in.

I've forgotten exactly which days the boat went which way

but it seems to me that it laid over in Norfolk and therefore it would go up the river on Monday and down on Tuesday. So, Tuesday and Thursday and Saturday would be the down days and there was always a lot of fish to be shipped, especially in shad season. Shad season in those days was a really big business, and there were lots more fish then than there are now. That old dock at Jamestown was a beehive of industry for a couple of hours before the steamer would come along to pick up their fish, as the fishermen would pull up there with their boats and get their fish — whatever they might be, shad or other — up on the pier and packed in barrels. Sometimes there would be a little disagreement about which barrels belonged to which fishermen. I've heard quite a few arguments over there from time to time.

There was a Negro man who stayed at Jamestown. The Barney family owned Jamestown Island at that time. I don't know whether he was an employee but he used to trap the marshes in the winter and fish in the summer, and in the summer he used to stay out on that pier. I can remember seeing him out there many times. He had sturgeon nets too and would go out in the river.

There must have been about eight or 10 commercial fishermen around here at that time. I've been out with my old friend Dick Waltrip and lifted his nets many and many a time. I don't know how long he had it, but he had one of the old Chesapeake Bay log canoes called the Sunset. He would put a couple of bateaux behind the Sunset, go out into the river, fish his nets, and then take the fish up to the pier at Jamestown and unload them.

After the boat stopped running, they had to bring the fish home to pack and truck them to Yorktown where the boat would take them to Baltimore and Washington. At one time there were two boat lines over there that ran overnight.

You had to be pretty tough to take the rigors of fall and winter and even spring if you were a fisherman in those days.

But the river fishing business has almost gone now. That time is gone and it will never come back. Not very many good fish will stay in the James River nowadays. I've seen dozens of trout caught out there where the fill was made across from the mainland to Glasshouse Point. The river had plenty of croakers in it, too, but not many fish of that type will stand the river with what's happened to it in the way of pollution. It's a pretty sad situation.

The Sunday Morning Sun mentioned the Ayers family, saying that Mr. Ayers had been ill. It mentioned my father building a new barn which he did shortly after we came here. The Ayers family and my family had almost identical sets of farm buildings, houses and barns and all. Both of the original houses still stand. The Ayers house was completed about 1906, and ours about 1907. I lived there for by far the majority of my years.

Along with Mr. Tuttle and his family, there were a great many others around here who were interesting people. It seems as if modern civilization tends to homogenize people into a sameness. But we had a lot of people around at that time that there wasn't any chance of changing their ways.

The Maine and St. George's farms were owned at that time by Mr. E. W. Warburton — everybody around then knew him and I expect a book could be written about him. He was a very able and smart man. He did farming and was a lumberman.

Another outstanding old character was Mr. Gustavus Jackson Jones who has a lot of descendants around here. There were many others and perhaps sometime I might try to write about some of these outstanding people.

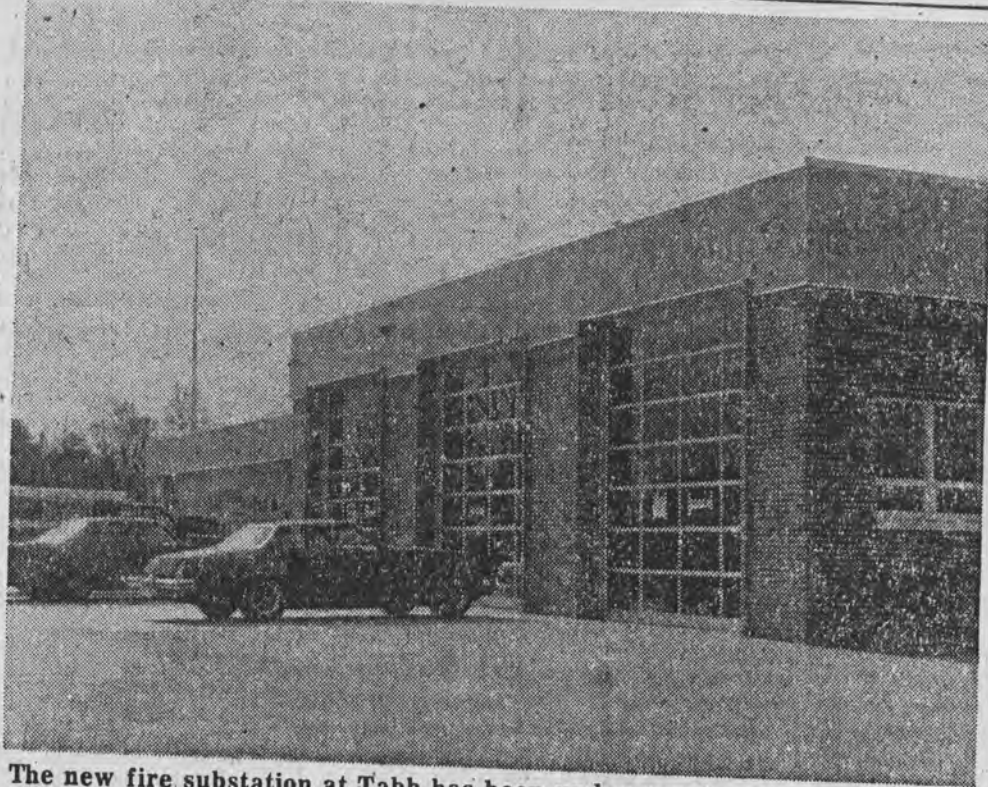


(Staff Photo by Herb Barnes)

## Hefty swing

Rodgers Smith, York Supervisors chairman, swings fire ax breaking ground for Big Bethel Road fire station, watched by (from left) architect Byron Williams, contractor Leon Perlin, Fire Marshal Wallace Robertson.

March 27, 1973



The new fire substation at Tabb has been under construction for one year and is costing \$220,300.

## Officials Make Preliminary Check On Tabb Fire Station

By ROBERT GRAVES  
Staff Reporter

YORKTOWN—Officials were performing a preliminary acceptance check on the new fire substation in Tabb Monday, with fire marshal Wallace Robertson conferring with architect Byron Williams and engineer Leonard Waltz.

The three checked out equipment and various parts of the new building, located on Bethel Road, adjacent to the Tabb High School.

A few minor deficiencies were found, and a final inspection is expected in about a week. The building will be officially accepted by the York County Board of Supervisors after the deficiencies have been corrected, Robertson said.

The materials, including the brick, were selected to blend with the school architecture.

Robertson said the new building, under construction for about a year, cost \$220,300.

He said that he will assign one fire engine, one tanker truck and a rescue unit to the new facility and place

eight paid firemen there, four to a shift.

The station will provide fire and rescue protection for citizens and businesses in the Bethel District, while the main station in Grafton will continue to provide protection for Grafton and Bethel Districts.

"There will be eight paid men assigned to each fire station," Robertson explained.

The new station has three drive-through bays and is capable of housing five pieces of equipment.

The fire marshal will keep two fire engines, one tanker truck and two rescue units at the main station in Grafton, along with a utility

truck and a brush jeep.

"Both stations will provide support for each other when necessary," Robertson said.

"The new station will allow us to knock off five miles in response time when answering fire or other emergency calls for Bethel District residents."

The Grafton station will continue to take all phone calls for emergency units, with units from both stations dispatched through two-way radio and direct phone line.

Robertson anticipates that the new facility will be placed into operation sometime this month.

# Seaford Post Office History

## Dates Back To 1889

By KATHARINE KINNIER  
Staff Reporter

**YORKTOWN** — Mrs. Merle Callis, postmaster, and Mrs. Delia Byrum, her assistant, share postal and household duties at the Seaford Post Office. They do landscaping work around the building located on Seaford Road, and carry on an active ecology program as well.

About the only thing they haven't done at the post office is build it. Seaford once had a postmaster who did just that.

Mrs. Callis and Mrs. Byrum are assisted on a parttime basis by Mrs. Freda Drees.

Mrs. Callis became postmaster through sheer chance. She accompanied her husband, Allen Moss Callis, during the late '40's when he went to take the postmastership test. She decided to take the examination too, "just for fun." Both passed. Her husband got the job, and served from 1947 to 1948, before his retirement. Mrs. Callis' name was the only one on the register when someone was to be chosen to succeed her husband. She was offered the job and took it. She served as Acting Postmaster for a year. Her permanent appointment became official in August, 1949.

Mrs. Byrum joined the employe roster in 1953. The pair have been there so long, according to Mrs. Callis, they are "really antiques."

"I have never ceased to be thankful for the new postal building," Mrs. Callis said quietly.

Their former office on Back River Road was a primitive affair. One light hung from the ceiling in the one-room office. There was no bathroom or running water. And from time to time, snakes came up through the holes in the floor.

Receipts have increased ten-fold since the move to the new building. Formerly a fourth class post office, the Seaford station now ranks as second class. Known as an associate office, Seaford is independent of affiliation with other offices in the first District. It is accountable only to the sectional center in Norfolk for its regular reports and records. For a time, mail cancellations carried a Yorktown postmark, when rural free mail delivery was begun on Nov. 16, 1955. This caused some displeasure on

the part of Seaford residents, according to Mrs. Callis, since it "took away the town's identity."

"We're pushing ecology now," Mrs. Callis said. The post office-oriented campaign includes a large framed poster of ecology issue stamps, which is displayed prominently on the wall. The two trim shrubs and weed around the flowers. In addition, they have a vegetable garden where they grow tomatoes, potatoes, peppers and onions. For the first time this year, they have someone to cut the grass for them. They have "no time for it now," Mrs. Callis said. They had just finished cleaning all the windows in the office.

Legend on a recent Postal People Award, forwarded to the three-person staff, seems an apt description of the work done by Mrs. Callis, Mrs. Byrum and Mrs. Drees. It reads: "In Recognition of efforts beyond the call of duty in bringing credit to the United States Postal Service." It is signed by W. A. Bolger, Regional Postmaster General.

They received a special award in 1967 for their 100 per cent participation in the United States Savings Bond Program. "Most postal workers do take part in the program, Mrs. Callis advised. They can save and help out at the same time, she said.

A special "People Serving



Mail Photo by Herb Barnes

Mrs. Merle Callis, Postmaster, and Mrs. Delia Byrum, her assistant, are shown in front of the Seaford Post Office.

You" stamp issue recently honored postal people who carry out the many post office jobs. Employees cover 4 million miles each delivery day to bring the 13 billion pounds of mail delivered yearly to 54 million urban and 12 million rural families, plus 9 million businesses. Post office personnel handle and deliver more than 500 million packages yearly and sell nearly 27 billion U.S. stamps.

Mrs. Callis is going to write to the Post Office Department to suggest they make skirts or slacks in the navy blue color on the attractive first issue stamps. The official post office emblem would be sewn on a matching vest. A further

stipulation for the combination skirt or pants and vest ensemble, would be that it be fashioned of easy care double-knit polyester. A shirtwaist would carry the print design of the ten stamps in the issue's collection — also to be made up in material of the no-iron variety.

Mrs. Callis is one of the U.S. Postal Service's foremost proponents. Speaking of changes in the system's methods over recent years, she deplored the "many complaints" received. "Any time you remodel," she said, "there are a lot of problems. You have to work out all the bugs," she continued, "and try different things until you hit on the successful one."

Eventually you're going to have a good system."

Mrs. Bessie Hogg Ironmonger has researched and documented practically every aspect of York County's early history. The Seaford section of York County was known as Crab Neck, before there was a post office located there, she says. "Prior to 1889," she elaborated, "residents of the Crab Neck area received their mail at Yorktown. This was a far from convenient service — over country dirt roads, by horseback or horse-drawn transportation. It is reasonable to assume that there were many days when no one in the community had 'gotten the mail.' Indeed, a once-a-week trip to the County Seat, by one of

another neighbor, bringing back any letters that might have arrived for various families in the area, was not an unusual occurrence.

"In 1889, plans were made for the establishment of a post office, and a record from the General Services Administration in Washington, D. C., reveals that the Crab Creek Post Office in York County was established Dec. 23, 1889, with William H. Hornsby the first postmaster." The mail went to Grafton, then to the present Oriana Road section. There, it was loaded onto the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad for its destination.

"The first Crab Neck Post Office was kept in the

general country store of William H. Hornsby, situated on Back Creek Road," Mrs. Ironmonger states. She further advises that there was an old Confederate war fort, located just across the road to the east of Hornsby's Store. This was an early landmark.

"On March 7, 1896, Benjamin F. Crockett became Postmaster, and the office was moved to a pre-war store building by Hillman's general store. It was a log building, just below the new brick Seaford Post Office.

"When Ethelbert W. Crockett was appointed Postmaster March 17, 1900, he erected a small frame building in which the Crab Neck Post Office was located, on the northeast corner of his farm, fronting on Seaford Road."

established in the other end of the county. A number of lumbermen were engaged in logging operations there, and a postal station at that location seemed warranted, Mrs. Ironmonger writes.

"Slaight's Wharf on Back Creek had steamer service at this time — a part of the river steamboat system from Norfolk, Old Point, Yorktown, Gloucester Point and up the Chesapeake Bay. A general store and post office at Slaight's Wharf seemed a good business venture, so Benjamin F. Crockett dismantled his store building on Chisman Creek, and rebuilt it at the wharf on Back Creek, moving the Calamar Post Office with the store. J. Y. S. Slaight and his son, E. E. Slaight, owners of the wharf, petitioned the Post Office Department to have the name changed from Calamar to Seaford — this on Dec. 23, 1900. Benjamin Crockett was its only postmaster. This station was discontinued on March 30, 1901, having been in existence only seven and three quarter months."

Everything was going along fine with Crab Neck Post Office under Ethelbert W. Crockett's administration, until his death May 2, 1907. It was then moved back to the William H. Hornsby store, with Mr. Hornsby as postmaster.

"There were those in Crab Neck who preferred a more dignified and/or polished name for their community," Mrs. Ironmonger has found. "So the Post Office Department was again petitioned for a name change, and it became Seaford Post Office on Nov. 15, 1910. Hornsby was Postmaster until 1914.

"Clarence J. Slaight became postmaster at Seaford on April 16, 1914, and office facilities moved into Slaight's General Merchandise Store on Seaford Road near three former sites of the office. When Gaston A. Wornom was appointed Postmaster on Oct. 22, 1920, the office moved up the Seaford Road a few hundred yards to Wornom's General Store for two years."

H. Hornsby became postmaster of the Seaford office for the fourth time. Back the post office went to his general store. On his death, his son, Oscar F. Hornsby was appointed postmaster. He took office in June of, 1923, and the post office continued in the same store.

Three years later, according to Mrs. Ironmonger, Mrs. Margaret M. Powell, William H. Hornsby's daughter, became postmaster. She served from the Aug. 6, 1926 date, for the next 21 years. This office was located in a room adjacent to Dr. L. O. Powell's office.

Meanwhile, the auto and motorized mail truck had replaced horseback and horse and buggy. Hard-surfaced roads replaced country dirt roads, something before 1930. The mail route to and from Seaford was changed from Grafton-Oriana to Yorktown-Lee Hall, and continued to commence from that point by the C&O Railroad, for further distribution throughout the country."

96  
1784 Edm. Crockett  
Crab Neck land to his son  
note name as  
as the

# Many Tourists Get Jump On

## Anticipated 'Triangle'

### Bicentennial Crowds

(c) 1973 N.Y. Times News Service  
**WILLIAMSBURG** — They call it the Historic Triangle, the three points being Jamestown, site of the first permanent English colony in the New World; Colonial Williamsburg, the great 18th-century restoration, and Yorktown, where Lord Cornwallis struck his colors to begin the end of the Revolutionary War. One would be hard put to find another area so small that encompassed so many primal events in the founding of the United States of America.

The 1976 American Bicentennial observance, almost inevitably will engulf this flat triangle, only 10 miles wide from Williamsburg to Jamestown via the westerly arm of the scenic Colonial Parkway, and 15 miles via the other arm to Yorktown. But already the flow of history-minded tourists is above the normal pace of

visitor attendance, and it is clear that many motorists are getting the jump on anticipated bicentennial crowds and doing this southern half of the cradle of America's liberty a few seasons early.

It is not a bad idea to rush the calendar because this historic country is not the kind you want to go through on a dead run. There is so much history to remember, discover and savor, and it is so provoking of thought to dwell on whence this country sprang, on the people who dared to found its early rude settlements and local governments, and those thereafter who steered it to what it has become, that you really need more time than most fast-moving travel schedules permit.

Williamsburg sells a three-day admission ticket to its craft houses and other exhibits, and you can use all three days and some of their

evenings (for the Madrigal Singers' candlelight concerts in the old court room or the tour by candlelight of the 18th-century Capitol) and still leave without having touched every exhibit. We spend most of a too-hurried day at Jamestown and we could easily have used many additional hours for a leisurely and more thorough study of the Jamestown Festival Park, its museum-like exhibits, the wooded peninsula on which stand the foundations of the original settlement and the reconstruction of Jamestown as it was shortly after the May 14, 1607, landing of the first 104 settlers.

Jamestown is a two-headed development — state and federal. Virginia created the festival park in 1957 to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Jamestown's settlement, and its popularity led to its con-

tinuance the year around by the state. Nearly 600,000 people visited Jamestown Festival Park last year, studying the European origins of the English settlement in Virginia in the Old World Pavilion and having trouble keeping the kings and queens straight, and in the New World Pavilion the accomplishments of Virginians after 1607.

Down toward the James River, a pleasant walk through tall trees, stands a full-scale reconstruction of James Fort with church, guardhouse, storehouse and 15 houses, Powhatan's Indian lodge, a pottery and, beyond them along the wharf, reconstructions of the three tiny ships that brought the first settlers — the Susan Constant, the Godspeed and the Discovery, respectively 76, 50 and 38 feet long.

Just down the road the National Park Service takes over with the aid of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. The federal park embraces a glass furnace as of old, built on the ruins of Jamestown's original (1608) glass works, and the Wilderness Road, a self-drive motor tour of the original Jamestown peninsula still thick with trees, grape vines and honeysuckle. Foundations of the first settlement building have been uncovered just beyond the rise of ground overlooking the river, where more than half of the first arrivals were buried that first terrible year in the new land.

There is no traffic here, no noises to interrupt the sound of wind through the trees and on the river, and it is not at all difficult to pause in the sunshine, lean against a tree, look out along the shoreline and try

to imagine what it must have looked like to that sea-weary band 366 years ago.

It is encouraging, in checking out the stream of visitors at all of the tourism centers of the Historic Triangle, to see the complete spectrum of the population represented among them, and to be able to report the interest and seriousness with which they relive their nation's early history. Yorktown, Jamestown and Williamsburg are not Disneyland; the visitor must invest something of himself as well as his time and mere presence to get the message from the clear, thoughtful and provocative exhibits.

Yorktown, at the far end of the Historic Triangle, is principally for battlefield buffs. There is a National Park Visitor's Center with a short indoctrination film

that is essential to those who come here without an intimate knowledge of the battle's plan and procedure. The center also has some rudimentary exhibits of battlefield relics.

The self-guided motor tour of the rolling battleground, well marked by map and road signs, leads up hills and down dales through which yankee and French troops clawed their way over heavily fortified British redoubts, and on a bright warm late-spring day it was a pleasant excursion into the woods if not into military strategy.

For some intangible reason, the simple granite column of the Yorktown Victory Monument, on a grassy promontory overlooking the York River, struck me as more impressive than most battlefield markers. Its 84 feet of Maine granite, topped

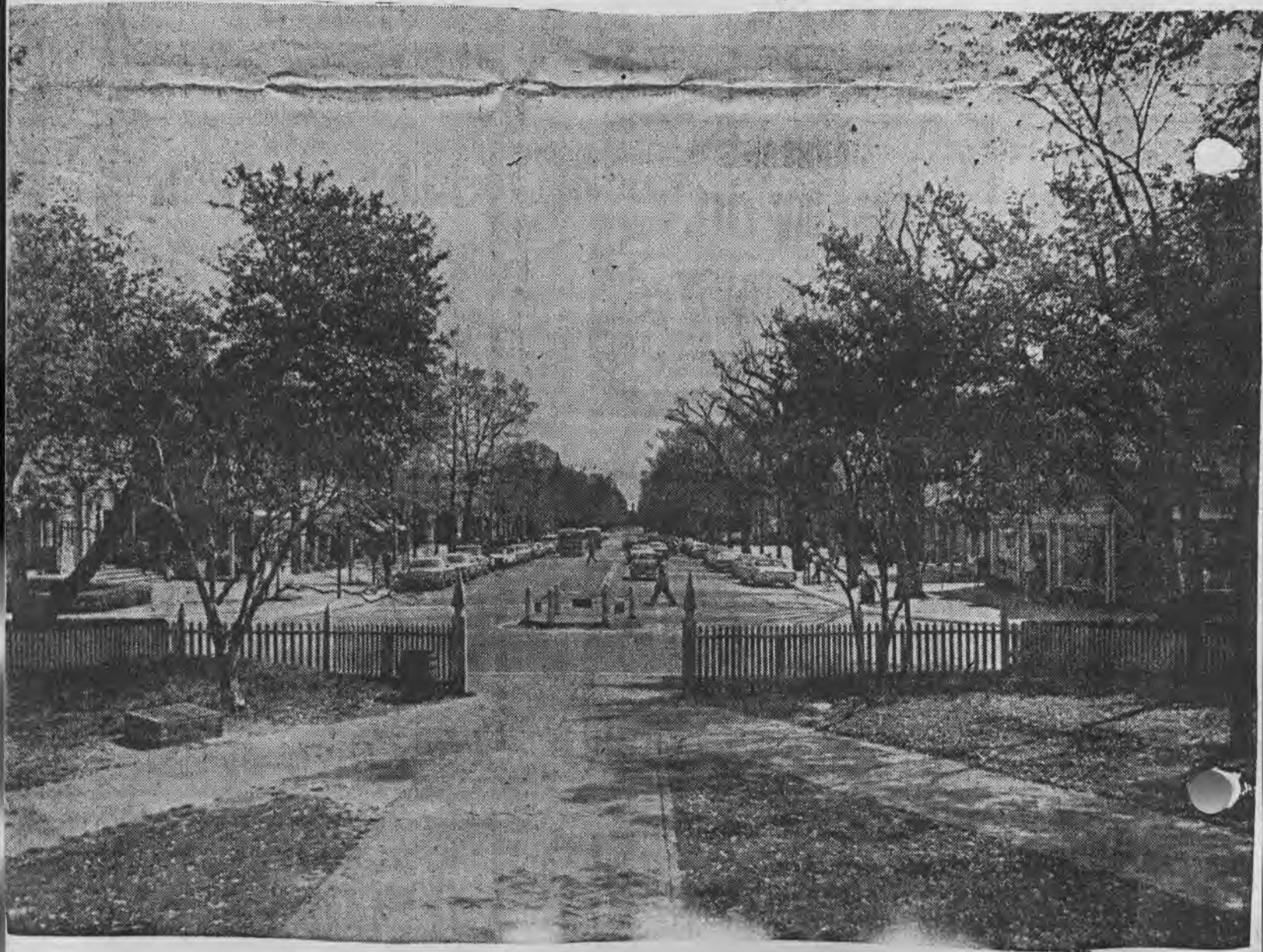
by a 14-foot statue of liberty were put up by a slow-acting Congress in 1884, more than a century after construction of the monument was voted by the Continental Congress on Oct. 29, 1781, only 10 days after the battle ended.

Perhaps my feelings stemmed from the line carved into the spire's base, explaining that the monument marks the "victory by which the independence of the United States of America was activated." Elementary school history taught most of us — incorrectly — that Cornwallis's surrender ended the Revolutionary War, but that exquisitely precise phrase — "by which independence was activated" — inscribes a truer picture of the agonizing years that followed Yorktown and led to the forging, six years later, of the Constitution and

of the American form of government.

The historic perspective becomes clearer, too, from reading the battle roll around the monument's base: 5,500 Americans, 7,000 French troops of the line, 3,500 Virginia militia and 36 French ships of war, against 7,251 British officers and men, 840 seamen, 244 cannon, 24 standards — all surrendered to General Washington and the Comte de Rochambeau.

With little reconstruction and virtually no preservation, Yorktown itself is a funny little — extremely little — village of a few hundred souls surrounded by river and battlefield. It reminds one of a small English village, the few streets disappearing into grassy fields only a couple of blocks from the main street.



## SETTLERS' MAINSTAY

99

*Rivers Always Important*

By KATHARINE KINNIER

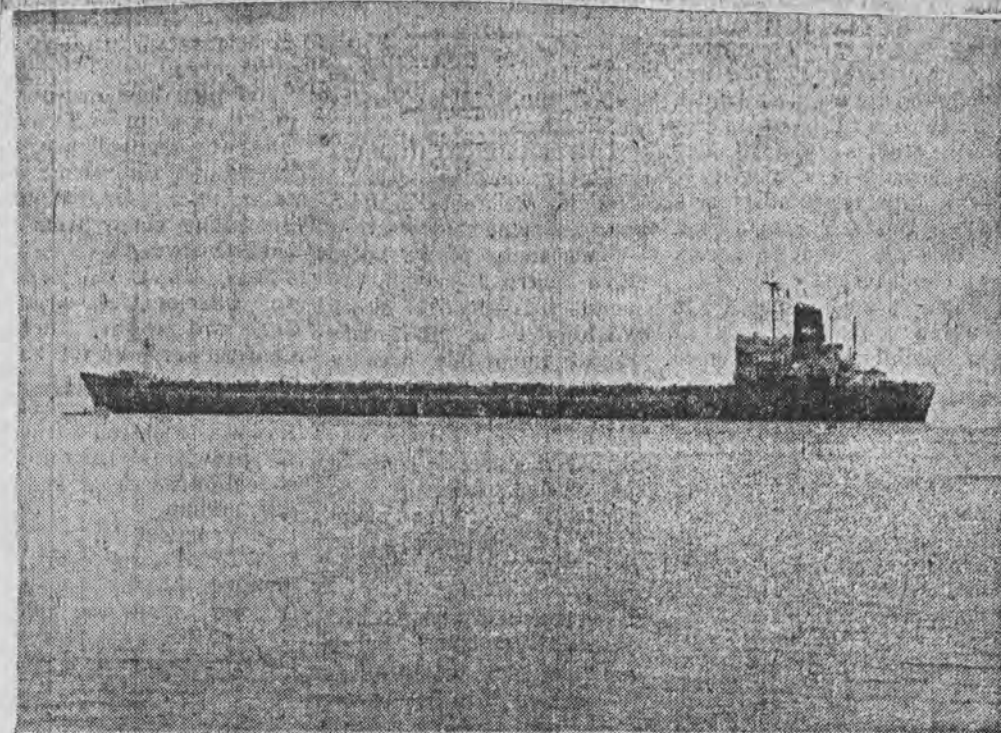
Staff Reporter

**YORKTOWN** — Ship traffic on the James and York Rivers always has played an important part in the life of the people of Tidewater. The earliest settlers — and the Indians before them — were dependent upon the two rivers and their tributaries for transportation and supplies.

Prior to 1781, Yorktown was a busy seaport town, with many ship arrivals and departures. After this time, Newport News, Norfolk, Hampton and Richmond became the leading harbor cities. A number of different types of craft, however, still may be seen on the rivers bordering the colonial towns of Yorktown, Jamestown and Williamsburg.

Tug-powered oil and sand barges and oil tankers still course the rivers, according to one of the captains serving on the Virginia Highways Department ferry between Scotland Wharf, Surry, and Jamestown. There are freighters carrying paper and general cargo. Packet boats headed for Maryland haul grain, soy beans, corn and gravel, he continued. There are a number of commercial fishing and oyster boats. Passenger boats — with the exception of the state-operated ferries and pleasure boats — no longer traverse the waterways.

For many years, Smithfield residents had no other way to get in and out of that town except by steamboats which stopped at regular ports of call up and down the rivers. Newspaper social notes of the day carried references to newly-married couples embarking on northern honeymoon trips via steamer from Old Point or Yorktown.



(Staff Photo by Willard Owens)

Freighters carrying general cargo still traverse the waterways bordering the colonial towns of Yorktown, Jamestown and Williamsburg. A commercial fishing craft may be seen at left in the picture.

As late as 1925, Poquoson residents relied on the cargoes of steamboats from Baltimore, Washington and Norfolk, which were unloaded at Old Point Comfort. A packet line, operated by P. K. Hunt, then transported the goods to Rens Wharf in Poquoson. The goods were carried away in horsedrawn wagons by local residents.

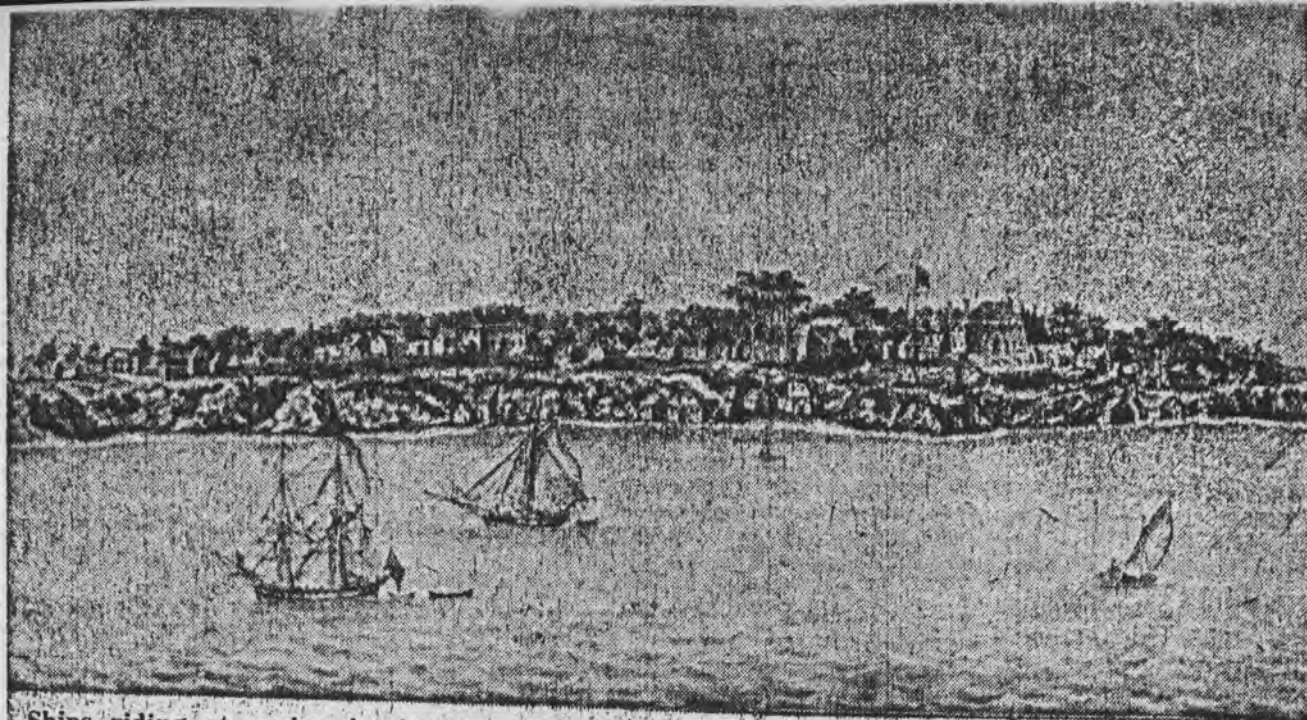
Rivers also presented at least one hazard to early settlers. In the 1680's, a newspaper account told of "York River inhabitants whose homes were rifled and plundered by several privateers belonging to a vessel then riding at anchor at the mouth of the river." The culprits later were captured.

News of ship comings and goings appeared in the colonial newspaper, The Virginia Gazette, in Williamsburg. These notices were of much more moment to the colonists of yesteryear, then they are to people in this area today. Then, many of the supplies on which they depended to carry on day-to-day life, were imported by ship from elsewhere.

The colonial newspaper notes in a Nov. 2, 1752 issues, the arrival of the sloop, Little David from New York. The ship's freight included 4 tons of biscuit cheese and fish, 3 boxes of chocolates, 8 hogsheads of rum, 36 hogsheads of molasses, 20 small cakes of sugar and 39 barrels of apples.

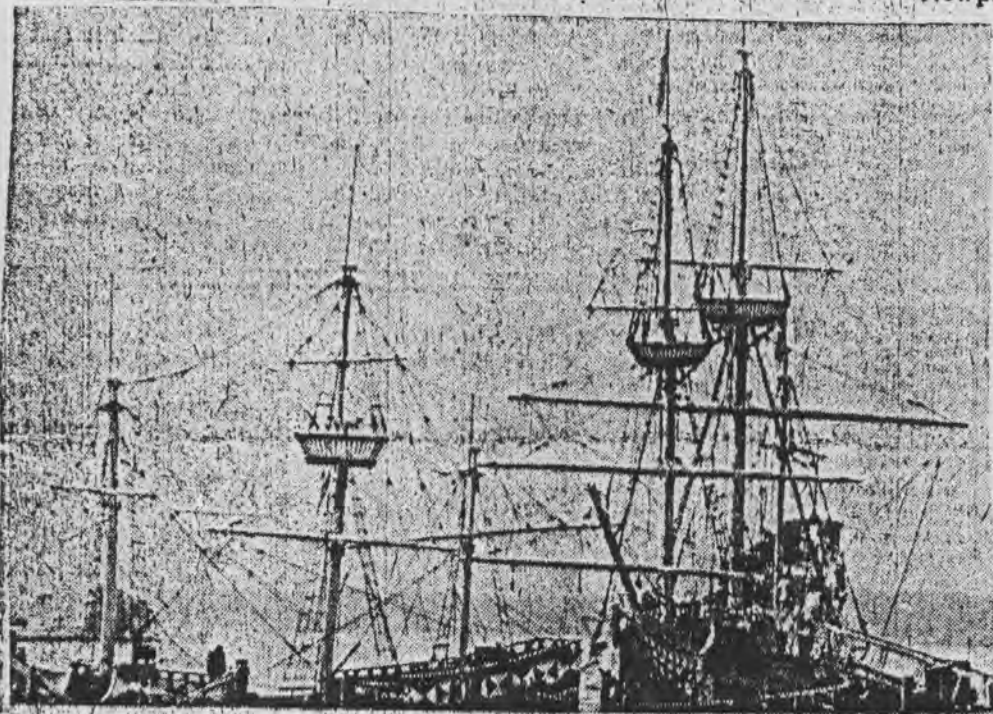
Earlier in the year, there was announcement of the Brig Union, of Hull, England, which had arrived with sundry European goods.

Ships clearing the local ports carried goods produced here. When the ship, Snow Binning returned



Ships riding at anchor in the York River in 1755, show the thriving colonial town of Yorktown in the background. This view of the

city's shoreline is contained in a log of early British ships, now in the Mariners Museum, Newport News.



(Staff Photo by Willard Owens)

The reconstructed Susan Constant, Godspeed and Discovery are shown at a dock facing the entrance to James Fort, Jamestown.

to Glasgow, the paper noted she was carrying 392 hogsheds of tobacco and 11,000 staves. Another ship carried tobacco.

An arrival in the York River, of the ship Thomas and Richard from London, England, told of its cargo of indentured servants. Among tradesmen in the group were "blacksmiths, joiners, taylor, bookbinders, printers, shipwrights, sawyers, gardeners, etc. The Sale to

begin at West Point immediately and continue 'till all are sold'."

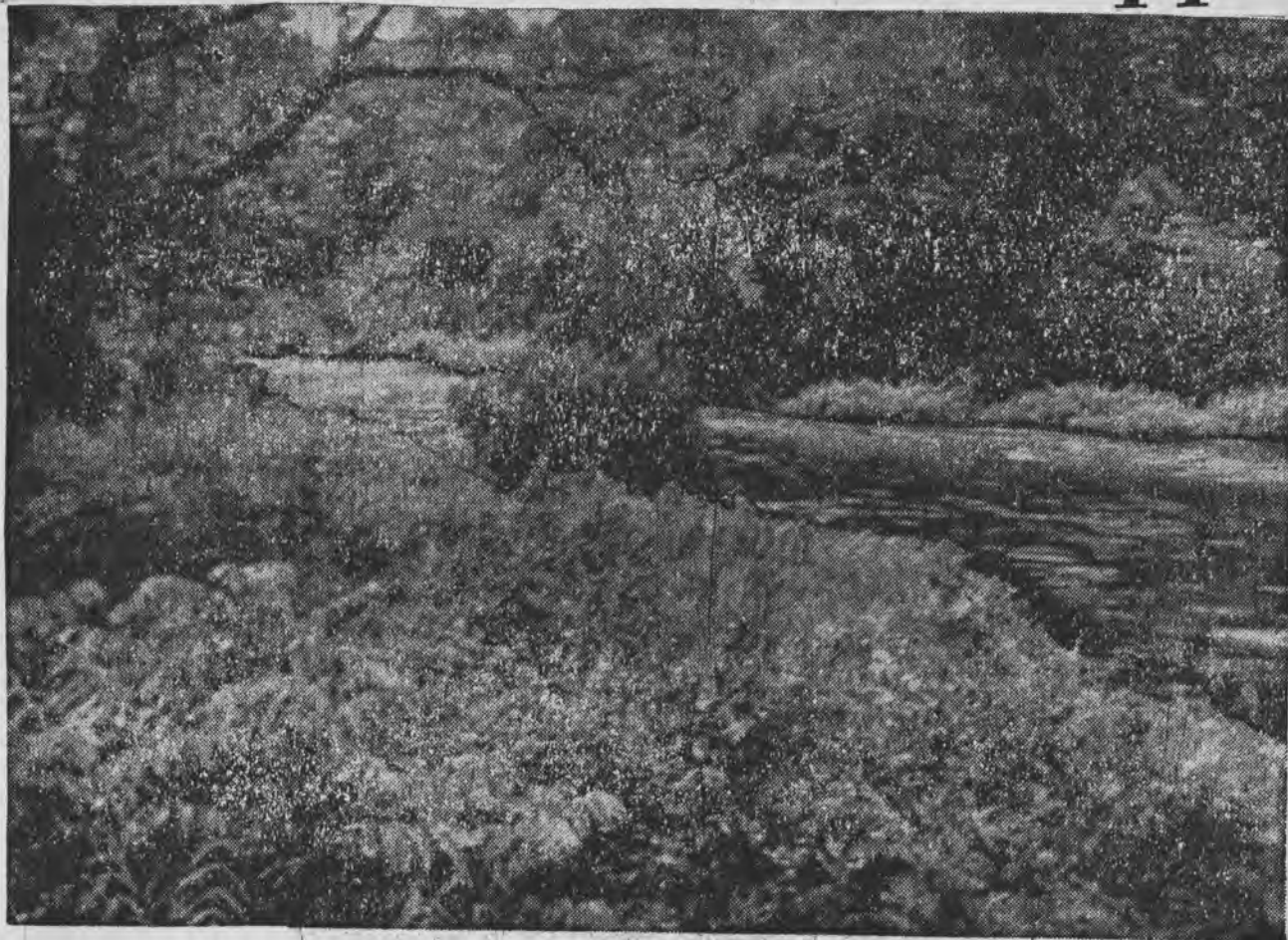
In the early 1750's, there was notice of the arrival of protestants seeking asylum in the New World.

The account follows:

"Last Sunday arrived the Tryton, Capt. Heatly, from Rotterdam, with about 80 or 90 French Protestants, that have escaped the Persecution carrying on in France, who were im-

mediately taken care of and carried to places prepared for them. They all made very clean, decent Appearance, (although they had a very tedious passage) and sung psalms as they came up the River, to return thanks to God for their Arriving at a Land of Safety. Most of them have been bred in the Silk Business, and therefore will be very useful and acceptable to this Kingdom."

# Historic Bracken's Pond Is Nestled In Nature's Trappings



(Staff photo by Katherine Kinnier)

Bracken's Pond, located parallel to one side of the Colonial Parkway between Yorktown and Williamsburg, intrigues the visitor who pauses to take note of it.

By KATHARINE KINNIER

Staff Reporter

**YORKTOWN** — A still pond in a serene setting of native shrubs and trees could almost be overlooked by the casual sightseer traveling on the Colonial Parkway between Yorktown and Williamsburg.

Though Bracken's Pond is signified by a National Park Service marker, it is almost secluded by overhanging trees, wild grapevines, bayberry bushes and fern beds. Scarlet-centered white flowers grow in random clusters about the area, and evergreens stand like sentinels on the far side of the pond.

The small body of water is named for an eighteenth century rector of Williamsburg's Bruton Parish Episcopal Church—the Rev. John Bracken.

The Rev. Mr. Bracken became rector of Bruton in 1773, soon after his arrival from England. He continued in that office for 45 years, until his death. In 1800, he was named Mayor of Williamsburg. He served for a long time as professor of the grammar school at the College of William and Mary, and was president from 1812 to 1814, according to Charles Hatch, Park Ser-

vice historian. He owned 800 acres of land on which his home was situated, Hatch said. Bracken's Castle, as it was named, was located in the vicinity of Bracken's Pond, Hatch said.

Through his marriage in 1776 to Sally Burwell of Carter's Grove, he was related to many leading families in Virginia, and acquired considerable wealth. For many years, he occupied and ultimately bought, the Allen-Byrd House, now used by Colonial Williamsburg for visiting dignitaries.

The cleric owned a good

deal of land along Williamsburg's Francis Street, including the lot on which the present-day Bracken-Carter House is located. On maps dating from the late eighteenth century, it is marked "J. Carter," and records show that in 1804, Elizabeth Carter was living here. The architecture of the restored home is characteristic of the mid-1700's, and now is used as a guest-house for Williamsburg Inn.

Though the clergyman owned the home, there is no evidence that he lived here.

He was elected Bishop of

Virginia in 1812, but declined consecration. It is presumed by some that he refused the office because of his age and many local commitments. Another possibility was the state of the church at that time. Church and State had incorporated prior to the first convention of clerical and lay deputies held in Richmond in 1785. The Rev. Mr. Bracken was nominated for Bishop at the second convention, but lost to the Rev. Dr. Griffith. An assessment was made upon the parishes of Virginia for funds to bear

the expenses of his visit to England for consecration. But such was the depressed condition of the church, that a sufficiency was not raised either in that year or the two following ones. In May, 1789, Griffith resigned his claim upon the office and died that summer.

The Rev. James Madison was chosen Bishop to succeed him, but like circumstances continued, and necessary funds for his consecration could not be raised either. One author writes of this event: "To the shame of the Church of Virginia, in that day, be it said, sufficient funds were not raised for Bishop Madison's consecration."

Or, in the words of another writer of the day—"The pervasive religious atmosphere of New England was generally lacking in Virginia."

It is entirely possible that the Rev. Mr. Bracken, on his election to succeed the Rev. Mr. Madison, also declined office because the continuing situation prevailed.

The Rev. Mr. Bracken, did, however, serve three times as deputy to the general convention.

# Battery Complex At Yorktown Undergoing Major Excavation

By Maria Anderson

The Grand French Battery Complex constructed two weeks before the surrender of Cornwallis on Oct. 19, 1781, is undergoing a major archaeological excavation at Yorktown.

Siege lines, redoubts and historical research

batteries are being unearthed off Cooke Road, south of the National Cemetery. The project involves tracing a series of positions laid out by French engineers from the headwaters of Yorktown Creek to Wormley Creek.

Charles E. Hatch Jr.,

historical research

National Park Service, said that the project is part of a masterplan and is keyed to the Bicentennial.

The archaeological work is being directed by Dr. Norman F. Barka, associate professor of anthropology at the College of William and Mary, and Leverette Gregory, director of field operations for Southside Historical Sites Inc.

Began Last Month

College students and volunteers are assisting in the project, which began June 4.

In describing the construction of the Grand French Battery complex, Barka summarized the 14 days leading up to the surrender of the British:

"Cornwallis was entrenched at Yorktown; the Americans and the French were making preparations for a siege. Artillery and ammunition was moved to the front lines and on Oct. 6 the first trench was begun.

"The objective was to work at night, and put all the dirt they could between them and the enemy before dawn. This was done for several nights by a digging detail, with troops guarding them from a distance."

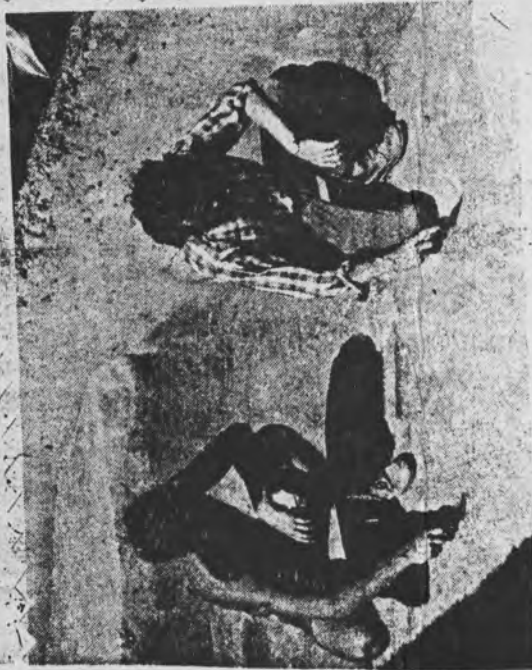
"There was no Civil War activity on this precise location, and after the surrender at Yorktown, all open trenches were filled in by the soldiers.

Those assisting with the archaeological work include: Ed Ayres, Doug Sanford, Jim Davison, Jim Smith, Mary Beaudry, Tom Langhorne, Jim Hirstein, Bob Johnston, Dave Hess, Sarah Tolson, Jane Townes, Jan Fry and Robin Webb.

"Old maps give approximate locations. However, even without maps we could pick up the trenches. Once a hole is dug



At the end of a hot day of digging in the sun, wheelbarrows are chained to a tree.



Troweling within the first parallel trench of the Grand French Battery Complex are Jim Hirstein, left, a student at William and Mary and Dr. Norman F. Barka, associate professor of anthropology at the college.

continued

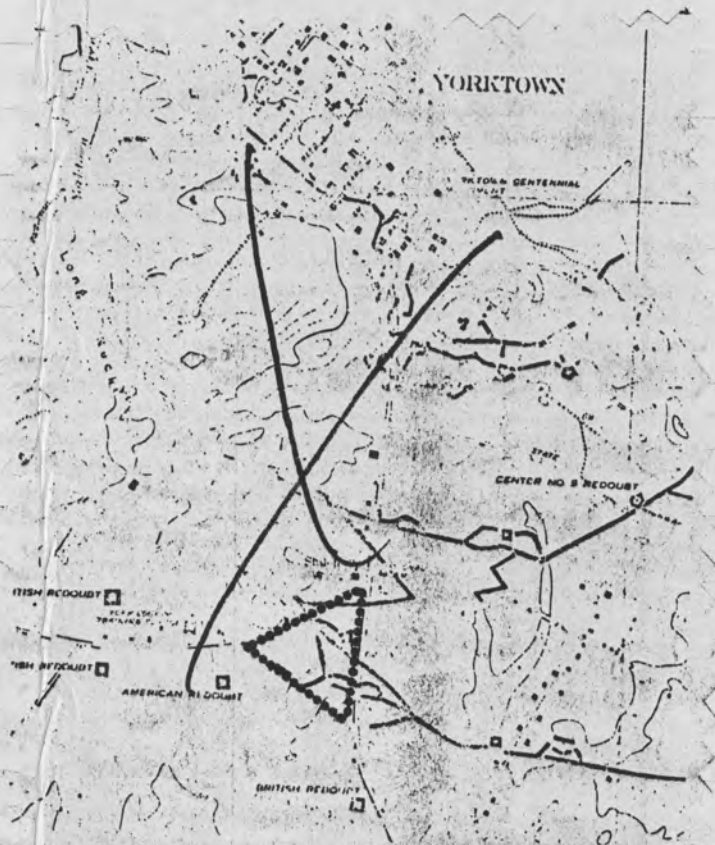
The soldiers did not throw dirt out haphazardly when they were digging, Barka said. Earth was precisely arranged, according to traditional military custom.

"There were sloping earthenworks in front of the siege line, six or seven feet high for protection. If the enemy came up on the slope, he was exposed to soldiers behind the earthenworks, but could not fire at them because of the angle. The trenches were zig-zagged to keep the maximum amount of earth between the allies and the British."

In addition to the first siege line, the allies established batteries and redoubts and built connecting trenches for transporting men and ammunition. Later a second parallel line was laid out, closer to the enemy. The French took positions to the left toward Yorktown Creek, and the Americans were on the right.

104

*Continued*



Map of Yorktown area shows the location of the historic Grand French Battery Complex constructed in 1781 and now being unearthed. The area is shown by dotted triangle on the west side of Cooke Road, near the National Cemetery. In the 1930's siege lines, redoubts and batteries

#### Asked For Terms

It was the completion of the second parallel, Barka pointed out, that marked the end for Cornwallis. With the cannons only a few hundred yards away, he asked for a discussion of terms.

Barka said that in the mid-1930's a quarter of the Grand French Battery line was reconstructed on the other side of Cooke Road.

"The present Rt. 704, now known as Cooke Road was called the York Hampton Road in colonial times.

"Right now we are concerned with locating the first siege line — four batteries, a redoubt and numerous connecting trenches. We have located many of these and are defining them now."

The site is valuable not only for information on military fortifications, but because it is one of the few sites where there is good historical dating.

"We know when they built the trenches; we know the surrender dates. Artifacts can be dated within a two-week period."

Thus far not many artifacts have been unearthed, however.

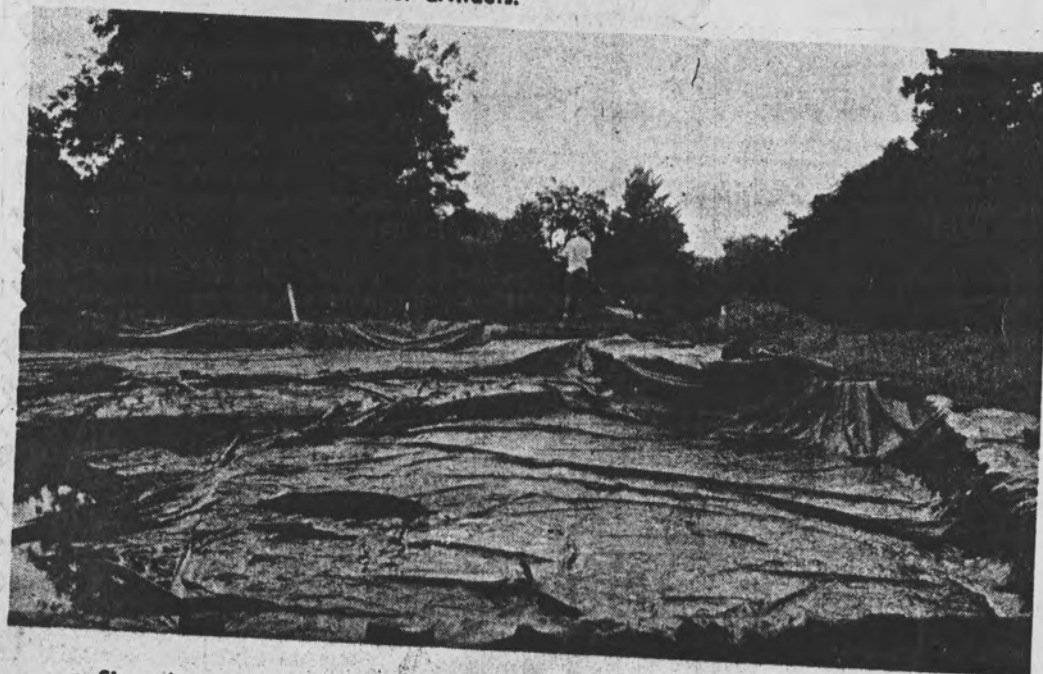
"Our main concern has been in uncovering the siege lines; later we will sift through the dirt. We have found some cannonballs, mortar shell fragments, gun flints, pottery and glass."

77 105

July 27, 1973



Mary Beaudry, anthropology graduate of William and Mary, heaves a shovel full of dirt into a wheelbarrow. The earth will later be sifted for artifacts.



Siege lines, redoubts and batteries — all part of the Grand French Battery Complex dug in 1781 — are being uncovered at Yorktown. Heavy plastic is protection against rains.

Photos by Maria Anderson

10 106 81



Type of Crews working at the site.  
Bottom left hand corner - St. Barba.

## YORK BATTLEFIELD

## Students Unearth History

By ROBERT GRAVES  
Staff Reporter

**YORKTOWN** — The outline of the cannon installations of the Grand French Battery on the Yorktown Battlefield are beginning to take shape after two months of work by students of the College of William and Mary.

Under the supervision of Norman Barka of the college's anthropology department, the students have been digging and scraping away soil to lay bare various shades of dirt to discover where the batteries and trenches existed during 1781 when the Americans and French surrounded Yorktown and shelled the British until Lord Cornwallis surrendered to General George Washington.

Barka said that a portion of the Grand French Battery has been previously reconstructed, but that the greater part of it is still buried under the cover washed over by the years since the great siege.

"We are still tracing the lines of trenches and positions and are now about ready to delineate it more exactly," Barka said.

The 12 anthropology students have been digging since early June.

"We have located two batteries and a redoubt and the main siege line, as well as connecting trenches," Barka said. "We still have another battery to locate accurately, although we know the general area."

Barka feels the work is good training for the students — a rare opportunity to dig at an archaeological site on a famous military field.

The students, some still in college and others who have already graduated, are being paid salaries for their summer of labor.

But they have a strong interest in the work they are doing on the battlefield.

"You almost have to be interested to survive two



Student scrapes away at side of ditch to determine outline of the site of an artillery battery.

months of hard labor," Barka said.

He feels that actual on-the-site digging gives students training unavailable in a classroom setting.

"We have uncovered cannon balls, shrapnel, musket balls, pottery, glass and rifles," he said.

"We have reached the point where we will dig into the batteries, including the powder magazine, and we expect to find many more artifacts."

Current plans call for the reconstruction of both the first and second battle lines from which American and French artillery mercilessly

served, but like all plans of the park will depend upon whether funds are available.

Research for the program has been accomplished by Charles E. Hatch Jr., research historian for the Washington office of the National Park Service, stationed at the Yorktown Visitors Center.

The British positions are pretty well delineated on the battlefield, but portions of the French and American siege lines have not been reconstructed.

One of the main strongholds of the first siege line was the Grand French Battery Complex, with from 30 to 35 artillery pieces trained upon the British in Yorktown.

A series of batteries, this complex was located east and west of Route 704.

The east portion has been reconstructed, but the western section, about 80 per cent of the works, has not.

The battery was composed of mortars on dead mounts, cannon and howitzers on carriages. The French held positions in a line running from Yorktown Creek east to a point midway to the York River, connecting with the American Line.

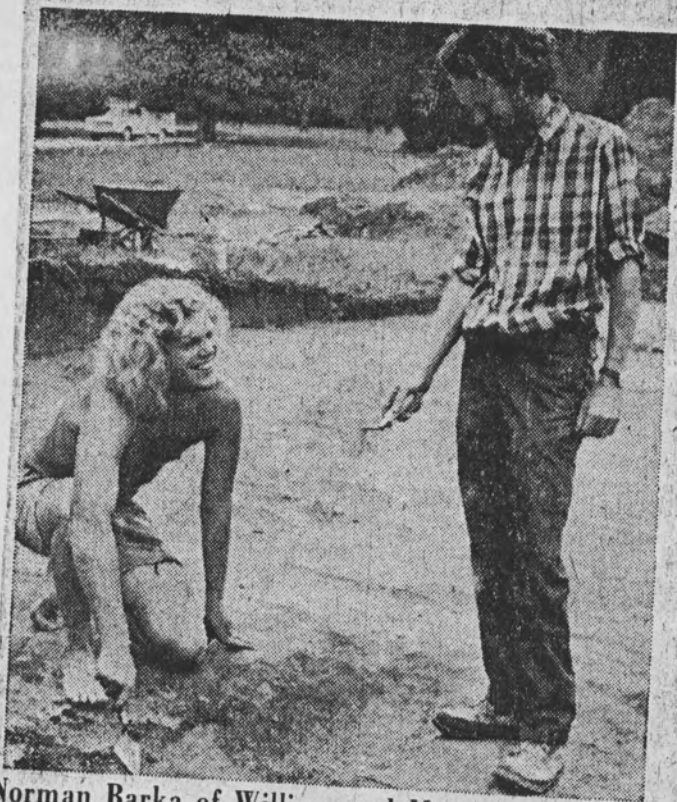
The archaeological work is being done from a map showing the Yorktown Battlefield as it was during the siege.

The American-French lines stretched all the way from the York River, where the former superintendent's house is located, to Yorktown Creek, entirely encircling the town.

pounded British troops into surrendering.

This will be one of the major development programs to prepare the Colonial National Historical Park for the nation's Bicentennial ob-

808



Norman Barka of William and Mary Anthropology Department, discusses archaeological digging on Yorktown Battlefield with student.

# Report Cites Need For Growth Control Along Route 17

## In York

By ROBERT GRAVES  
Staff Reporter

YORKTOWN — Without direction and control, York County's major artery, Route 17, would surely become a congested, overused highway, according to a report on land use.

Such information will become a matter of great concern as York's master plan develops under the guidance of the consulting firm of Gruen Associates of New York.

The firm is researching influences and trends which are shaping the county and preparing a plan for controlled growth, with periodic reports to citizens and officials in an attempt to include community participation.

Clark L. Berggren and Joseph L. Musika, political science students, commented in a study that in the past there has been no real control of growth along Route 17 in York, with businesses and homes springing up here and there in disorderly fashion.

"The old and rundown exists adjacent to the new, and junk yards dot the roadside adding to aesthetic disorder," the report states.

It was emphasized during a recent public meeting held by the Gruen firm and county officials, with citizen participation, that growth pressure is inevitable along major highways and will be stronger where public sewerage and water services are provided.

If growth is inevitable, then the key to master planning is to control through zoning to achieve the appropriate density of population and business in the logical areas, was the message to citizens.

Thus the major roads in York will be among the focal points of intense study to achieve this control.

The Berggren-Musika report notes that there is a myriad of types and styles of buildings along Route 17 from the Coleman Bridge over the York River to the Newport News city line, ranging from broken-down shacks to modern offices.

"Between the Newport News City line and Route 134 there exists numerous junkyards, gas stations, retail stores, restaurants and homes," it states.

"Needless to say, these fail to complement one another to any degree — for example the junkyards have wrecks positioned here and

there around their premises with no effort to conceal them from the view of passing motorists.

"On the other hand, many attractive offices and retail establishments can be found adjacent to the junkyards, such as a tractor dealer.

"In the area from Lakeside Drive to Vernon's Corner there exists a rather dense area of business. Once again, the types of businesses vary from filling stations to doctors offices to automobile sales. This area is more appealing to the eye than that previously mentioned, but it is rapidly expanding due to a lack of firm control.

"The last section of land runs from Vernon's Corner to the Coleman Bridge. It is relatively free from commercial establishments, excepting a few filling stations, a motel, a few restaurants and Yorktown Materials.

"The main problem in this area is the rundown houses which are located between the railroad spur and Vernon's Corner. Many of these buildings are inhabited, yet seem to be below standards set for adequate housing."

The report listed five significant access routes for Route 17, including Route 134, Oriana Road, Fort Eustis Boulevard, Goosley Road and the Colonial Parkway, and remarks that these are inadequate and need to be upgraded.

The recently dual-laned Route 134 is more than adequate to handle its purpose, while the parkway is adequate as a tourist access for Yorktown, Jamestown and Williamsburg, it was indicated.

The other three roads, however, were listed as narrow, winding two-lane roads which are ill-equipped to handle present levels of traffic.

The transportation network will be expanded upon the completion of four projects, with a target date of 1980. This will include a new access route from Oyster Point Road and Jefferson Avenue to Wythe Creek Road in Poquoson, another from Patrick Henry Hospital to Seaford Road at Vernon's Corner, a third from Fort Eustis Boulevard and Jefferson to Hornsbyville and an extension of Big Bethel Road to Hornsbyville.

"These new access roads will greatly enhance the flow of traffic into and away from the area served by Route 17," it was stated. "They will serve to make travel to this area from any point on the Peninsula much more efficient."

It was pointed out that many more people will be attracted to the county after the installation of sewer lines, thus increasing the

use of Route 17.

The report explained there will be a large influx of tourists starting in 1976 when the nation begins to celebrate the 200th anniversary of independence. Tourist facilities coupled with the celebration will place a demand on the use of land and Route 17.

A further demand on the highway is foreseen when tolls are lifted from bridges and tunnels in Hampton Roads sometime in 1974.

The highway is a north-south thoroughfare, beginning in Northern Virginia and ending in Florida; it is a commercial link with all kinds of businesses on both sides from Newport News to York High School; and it is a commuter route with peak hours 6:30-9:30 a.m. and 3:30-6 p.m.

The report warns that a major artery which is heavily commercialized can bring about a conflict

resulting in congestions such as that experienced on Mercury Boulevard.

"To the new residents and visitors Mercury Boulevard is a jungle," the report states. "There is a definite lack of signs to inform the motorists of what to expect next. The restrictions on turns make reversal of direction a major operation."

"To combat the lack of traffic signs, the commercial establishments have elevated their signs to such a height and enlarged them to such proportions that Mercury Boulevard appears as a maze of signs to the motorist."

Density statistics can assist in showing how the problem came about. There were 15,000 users a day in 1959 on the boulevard from Aberdeen Road to I-64, but by 1971 there were 36,570 users — representing a 143 per cent increase, although the population of the Penin-

sula only rose 34 per cent.

The study warns that Route 17's present condition is not so different from the situation that existed on Mercury in 1960.

At this late stage it is impractical to zone it anything but, commercial, it was explained, but recommendations include requiring heavy restrictions by imposing site regulations and limits on types of commerce, restrictions on access routes and heavy emphasis on the 1776 theme.

Trailer courts should be improved to make them more pleasing to the eye and action should be taken to remove existing abandoned shacks.

The report noted that in the area of the Grafton Shopping Center the land has been commercialized to the point that traffic flow is severely hampered and since it is not reversible, recommends stabilization of

the situation.

New businesses should be limited with traffic flow in mind and no new gas stations should be allowed.

The study recommends moving commercial centers off Route 17 to keep the primary uses as a city-to-city thoroughfare and a commuter route intact.

"The ability to hold down the commercialism of Route 17 will be the determining factor in keeping it from becoming another Mercury Boulevard over the years," it states. "Such a mixing of uses can only lead to traffic problems which are unsurmountable."

Recommendations include holding the number of traffic lights to a minimum, provision of adequate signs, and installation of turning lanes at key intersections to prevent blockage to the main flow of traffic.

# Battle Of Yorktown Now Being Filmed Near Philadelphia

By Ed Offley

**NEW HOPE, Pa.** — A documentary motion picture is being filmed here to give tourists visiting Virginia during the Bicentennial celebration a precise and accurate account of the last days of the American Revolution at the Battle of Yorktown.

David Wolper Inc., a Hollywood motion picture company which specializes in documentary films, was commissioned by the Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission June 4 to film the Battle of Yorktown. The movie will be shown

## Trouble With Yorktown

"You can't film the Battle of Yorktown at the Yorktown Battlefield," explained Paul Asselin, the associate producer. "They have clean, mowed lawns, flags, monuments, whatever. For historical accuracy, the Yorktown Battlefield is totally inaccurate."

Instead, the filming is being made at an abandoned state park in Bucks County. Asselin explained that some of the footage, such as the surrender scene, shots of Philadelphia and Mt. Vernon and other "establishing shots" would be filmed elsewhere or obtained from existing movies.

"It's silly to create a scene when it's already been shot," explained assistant director Murray Jordan.

One establishing shot that will be purchased is a wide-angle view of the Continental Army marching across a field.

## Why New Hope

Jordan said that the film's battle scenes required constructing the set in Bucks County. He added that the site was chosen because it "is accurate to the real event," is not far from Philadelphia (where substantial footage must also be shot), and because of the large number of Revolutionary War historical military units in the area which were hired as extras.

"They're a real bunch of gun freaks," noted one production assistant. "They're always boasting about the rarity of their damn muskets," she added. Asselin said the extras are "virtually slaves — but we tell them that when we hire them."

Gun freaks or not, the extras proved helpful for accuracy reasons, too. During a through-the-motions rehearsal, a brigade leader had the 30 extras practice a "fix bayonet!" drill for the shot. Several extras, all of them Revolutionary War buffs, protested the regimentation of colonial troops. "We're not the British, what is this?" The drill was discontinued and Asselin noted, "Every single one of these soldiers is prepared to correct any inaccuracies we make — and they do."

## Locally Hired

Except for Asselin, Jordan, director Bob Guenette and an accountant, all of the production assistants were hired locally. Jordan noted that nearby Bucks County Community College has a film department which became the source of many volunteers for the film.

Likewise, the only full-time actor on location last week was Jan Leighton, a 26-year veteran who specializes in — and resembles remarkably — General George Washington.

"I've also played Abraham Lincoln" — actor Jan Leighton said to a reporter.

Asked to outline the film's narrative, Asselin said, "We're shooting two films." He explained that Wolper was contracted to make the Bicentennial commission movie after it had already begun filming a 60-minute documentary for the ABC television network.

## First Of 12 Shows

"We are covering the same era of history — the same events — for both," Asselin said. The television documentary is the first in a planned series of 12 productions on key moments in American history, beginning with a film on George Washington — the man.

The Bicentennial commission movie — tentatively titled "The World Turned Upside Down" after the marching tune played by the British at Yorktown — will focus more on the Battle of Yorktown itself.

The television special will concern Washington's crossing the Hudson River, his march south and defeat of Cornwallis at Yorktown, Asselin said. It is to be aired on ABC TV Nov. 12, 1973.

"We'll shoot additional stuff for the Virginia film," Asselin said.

"There's not much you can do to change the actual event, just make the salient points interesting and more clear."

## Filmed "Destiny" Series

Both Guenette and Asselin have worked on a number of Wolper

documentaries, most recently filming five "Appointment with Destiny" productions for CBS television. "We did Abe Lincoln, Hitler, Jesus, Cortez and Admiral Peary," Asselin said.

Despite the deep historical nature of the film, 20th century tidbits of lifestyle and talk were evident. The juxtaposition was at times startling.

Yorktown Victory Center, which is slated to open in 1976.

The Wolper production crew has been filming location shots and narrative scenes since the middle of June. With nearly one-half of the actual filming complete, a visit was made to the production headquarters in Pennsylvania.

## Important Roles

Located some 35 miles north of Philadelphia on the New Jersey border, both New Hope and adjacent Bucks County played important roles in the actual Revolution. According to the official "History of Bucks County, Pa." published in 1876, "On three occasions, the Continental Army, with Washington at its head, marched through our county, to meet the enemy on historic fields, and in the trying period of December, 1776, it sought shelter on Bucks County soil behind the friendly waters of the Delaware."

But the obvious question posed to the film's director, associate producer and assistant director was, "Why are you filming the Battle of Yorktown in New Hope?" The unanimous answer from all three was, "We are trying to be accurate."

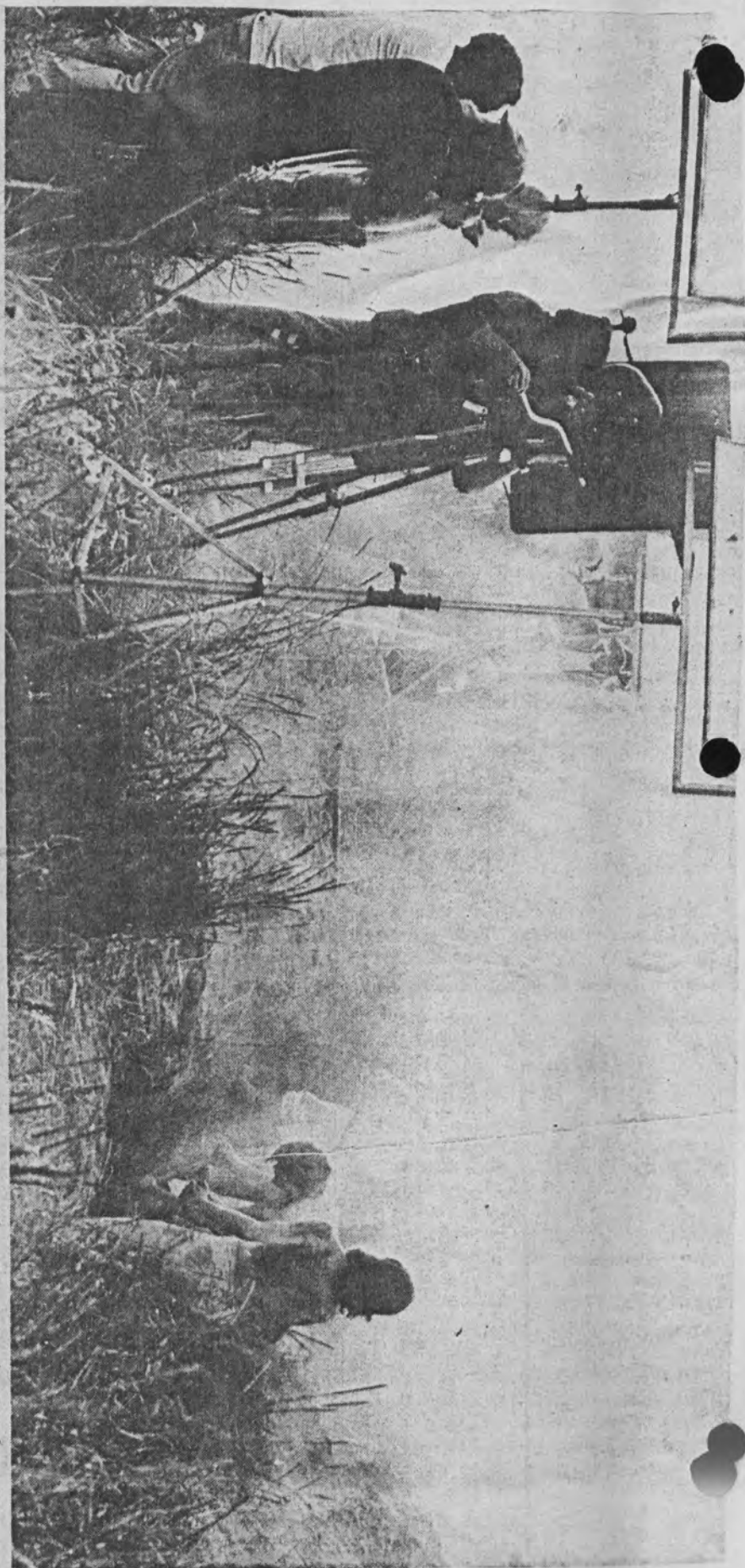


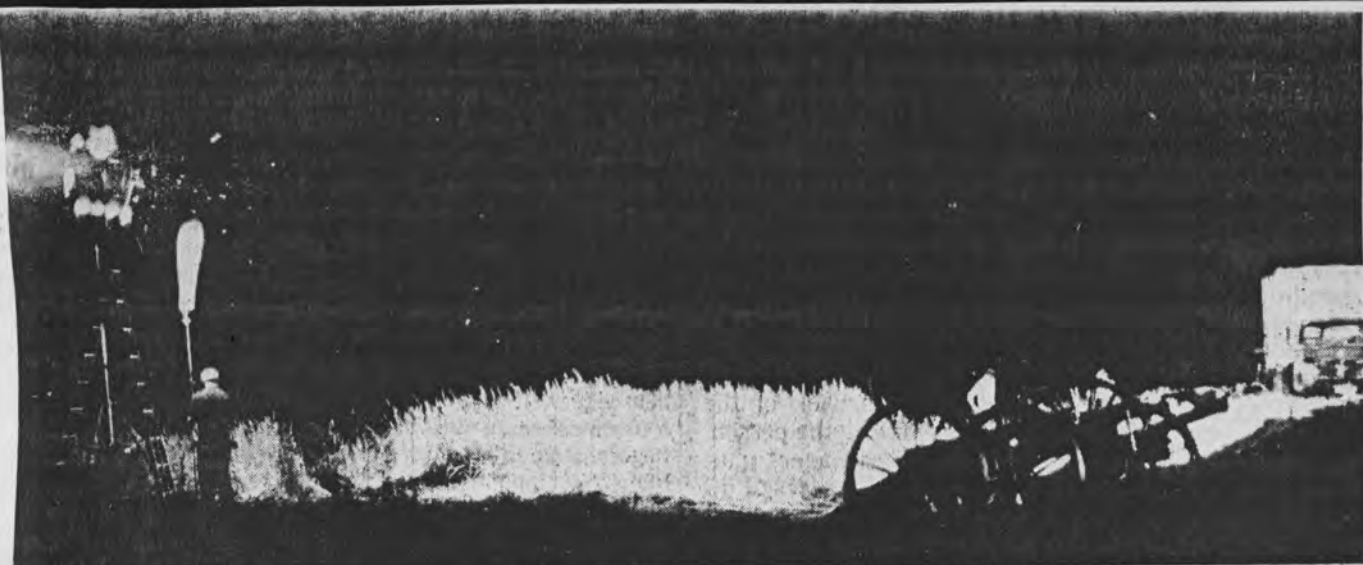
The Commander-in-Chief

In the trenches, one extra was heard saying to another, "It's hard to concentrate on the battle with that purple Pontiac parked right in front of us."

In between filming sequences, the conversation continually turned to the Watergate hearings. "They bugged every phone call?" a uniformed foot soldier was heard to say.

As the camera rolls, a "sapper squad" of Continental Army soldiers works to extend the American trenches. Artillery fire from the British positions at Yorktown is simulated by smoke charges placed around the set. Panels mounted on tripods reflect light into the trench.





Photos By Ed O'Leary

A carbon arc floodlight at left illuminates the trench network as technicians prepare to film a night battle scene.



Director Bob Guenette, with bullhorn, supervises a change in camera position during a break in the filming.



Assistant producer Paul Asselin, right, makes a hurried head count of Continental Army "extras" at the start of the day's filming. "They're virtually slaves — but we tell them that when we hire them," he said.

# Farming fades as way of life on modern Peninsula

Times-Herald  
Aug 13, 1973

Farming is a vanishing way of life on the Peninsula. In this first of a four-part series, Times-Herald staff writer Nancy Stancill examines the vestiges of farming in York County. Ms. Stancill's day-to-day work brings her in contact with all facets of life in Poquoson and York County.



115

The mind's eye immediately conjures up visions of green cornfields, vines overflowing with red tomato jewels, herds of cows grazing peacefully.

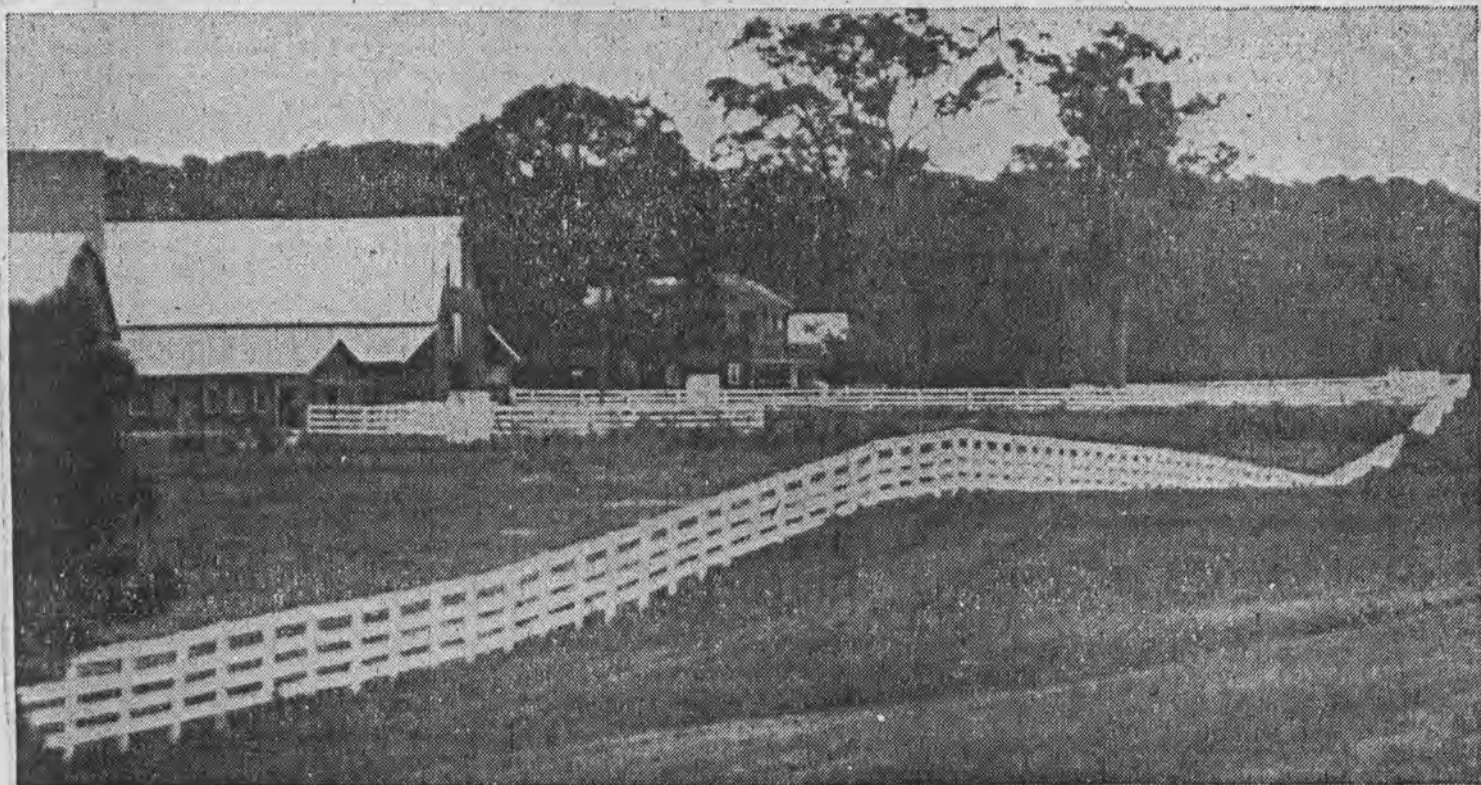
But it goes deeper than that. Farming, to most Americans, is fast becoming a nostalgic reflection on the good life as

they knew it in their younger days. The simple life which centered around family, crops, animals and never dealt with unfamiliar realities of traffic, drugs and other manifestations of urban life.

Commercial farming still exists on the Peninsula, but it rapidly is dying out as a

viable business venture. The few commercial farmers that have managed to survive are larger and stronger, but farming on a small scale is not profitable.

Farming in the immediate area is centered in the more rural area of York County, James City County and the Lee



Staff photo by Joe Fudge

Pastoral scenes such as this farm near Jamestown may be rare in coming years.

#### Hall area of Newport News.

Basically, farming is disappearing as a direct result of the Peninsula's prosperity, said William O. Holland Jr., York County VPI extension agent.

"Land is becoming too valuable for development purposes not to pose the temptation for farmers to sell it," said Holland.

High taxes on farm land are also a factor, he noted.

Much of the immediate Peninsula area never has been particularly fertile, he also pointed out.

In York County, the soil around the water has too much clay, he said. In other higher areas, it contains too much sand. Only a few areas such as Tabb, in the lower part of the county, and Skimino, near Williamsburg, have the necessary combination of clay and sand to support crops suitably.

Despite this, most York County land was cultivated until World War II, he said.

Then came Newport News Shipbuilding and military expansions and residential development began the boom that still continues full speed in the county.

Meanwhile, as more "city jobs" became available, an agricultural labor shortage began to be another detriment to farmers.

Today, most commercial farmers who remain farm as family units. Brothers and sisters and sons band together to work one farming business, finding that it is the only way they can survive.

Holland said he has about 50 persons

on an agricultural mailing list but only a few are large-scale commercial producers.

He has noticed, however, a distinct surge of interest in home gardening. Many residents have large vegetable gardens for freezing and canning purposes.

He traces high food prices and scarcity in fresh produce as the reason for this trend.

"So many people call us for information on fertilizers, insect control, preserving, canning and freezing," he said.

The extension service also spends much effort advising new homeowners on landscaping and plant and tree care.

An indicator of the county's future is the fact that a few months ago the York

Board of Supervisors changed all agricultural zoning to the designation of rural residential.

Holland feels that the farmers that remain are "getting more nearly what they should be getting for what they produce."

He noted that farmers are caught in a "cost-price squeeze" of burgeoning need for more equipment and the greater expenses of feed, seed and fertilizer.

"Today's farmer has to be a sophisticated businessman," he concluded. "You don't see many that fit the image of the bib-overalled character of the past."

Tomorrow Ms. Stancill visits T. D. Taylor, a truck farm in York County.

116

## VEGETABLES RAISED ON YORK ACREAGE

By KATHARINE KINNIER  
Staff Reporter

YORKTOWN — " 'Poor House Farm,' I call it," Lawrence E. Williams said of the quartet of old houses situated on approximately eight acres of farm and woodland off Route 17 in York County.

Once an occupant of one of the houses on the tract, Williams has never owned any of the land, but has farmed the open acreage and sold produce from it at a

vegetable stand on the place near the highway. He travels almost daily to the farm from his present home in Gloucester, where he was born and raised.

Maintained as "Poor House" by York County from about the mid 1800s, Williams advised that it "never had but two people at a time" in residence. The main house has seven rooms and kitchen, and is "over a hundred years old," he continued. His daughter once lived in this home, but now has moved, he said. The 12 inch wide floorboards in this house are "just as bright as new floors," he said. From 1951, Williams and his wife occupied another of the houses in the complex. In addition, there is a quaint smaller building, which Williams "imagines was a smokehouse at one time." The little house has a rather unusual embellishment for a utility building. Chippendale-type openwork has been built into the structure all around the top near the roofline. Some of the wood for the little house, he believes, was imported from England. "It evidently must be so," he related, for he has "heard this from several people," he said.

The original parcel of "Poor House" property was a 126 acre farm, Williams said, and advised that over \$250,000 worth of lots had been sold from it for a residential area. The land apparently was purchased in separate transactions from various owners by a George Cooper, and then in combination was sold by him to the county which began its maintenance as a "Poor House." The land sales are recorded in York County's Deed Book under an Aug. 31, 1842 date.

One of the sellers was a John L. Wright, who was contracted by the county in June of 1845 to repair buildings on the property. As lowest bidder, Wright received \$394.99 for the work to be done according to the following specifications:

"The dwelling as now used, to be shingled, new sills to be put in all the windows, chimney back to be taken in and hearth relaid in the dining room. One

# 'Poor House'

## Farm Still Worked

twelve light Dormer window 8 by 10 glass in the center of the front of the roof, weathering boarding supplied and nailed down where required. Front porch to be thoroughly repaired with heart pine floor, new sills of either heart pine or oak to be underpinned with seven pillars to form corner pillars to wing 2 feet away, 2 in front and one in middle of the back sill 2 feet or more long. The back porch to be removed and steps placed at back door of the house to be whitewashed inside and out and plastering repaired where necessary."

A followup memorandum in the York County Deed Book on Sept. 15, 1845, noted that the "Court issued contract by Commissioners with John L. Wright to repair the houses on the land purchased by the

county of George Cooper for a poor house has been complied with."

Williams, who has maintained the home and land in recent years, presently is a career concrete worker. At the age of 76 years, he has the appearance of one at least twenty years younger, and says he's "never going to retire." My wife and I go out and dance our heads off," he says.

He has served as a policeman with Basic Engineering — formerly Virginia Engineering. He was a watchman in Washington, D.C., for three and a half years, and served with the State Guard for a year. He once was quartermaster on a ship with the now defunct Old Dominion Lines.

The father of five children has 18 grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.



(Staff Photo by Katharine Kinnier)

Large old trees surround this dormered, weathered building which formerly was maintained by York County as a "Poor House."



"It was for those with no one to take care of them."

# How the Poor Farm 119 Got Some Flour

by Dorothy Harris

It never housed more than 10 at a time. But for more than 100 years, the Poor Farm on the corner of what is now Ella Taylor Road and Route 17 was the last place to go for the county's sick, old, and poor.

"It was for those with no one to take care of them," says Elvia Wood, whose father, Walter Wood, contracted with the county to provide food staples for the farm's residents from his nearby grocery store.

Built in the 1830's as an asylum for the poor, the Poor Farm, as it came to be called, was in use until Depression years and the coming of Social Security. It never had electricity or indoor plumbing. But as an early attempt at social services, it was successful.

The collection of buildings was dominated by the caretaker's house, where usually a man and his wife lived to cook and care for the residents. Long gone are the cottage-residences. A chimney embraced by overgrown flora is all that has survived of the caretaker's house.

Black and white lived together there, on a tract of land that stretched from what is now Lakeside Drive to the

marshes of Poquoson Creek. They grew vegetables, raised chickens and ducks, even had a small dairy.

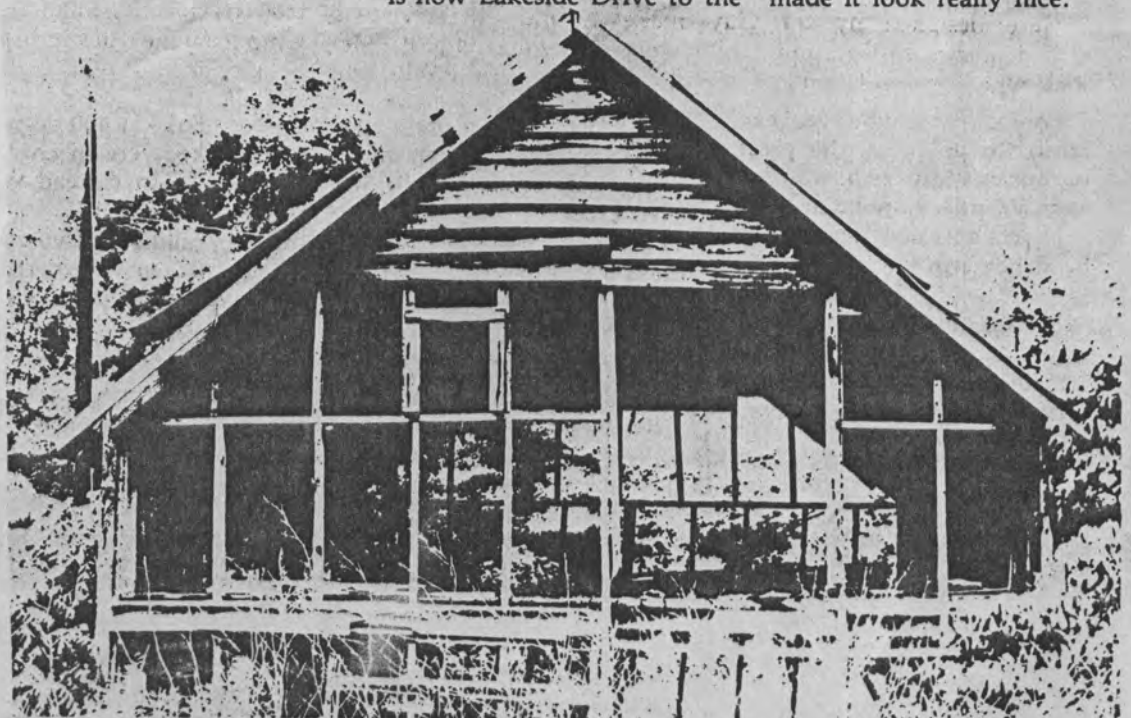
Miss Wood thinks the farm denizens may have had some horses. "Somehow they kept that grass cut and the yard neat and pretty. Please understand I'm not that ancient," she laughs, "but I heard my parents talk."

When she was a very young child, before the reservoir was built, the Yorktown-Hampton highway crossed what is now Harwoods Reservoir. Walter Wood's store and adjoining house (where Miss Wood and her father, mother and sister lived) stood on one fragment of the old road, now Darby Road.

"They didn't allow any flour for the poor folk, just cornmeal, because it was cheaper," adds Miss Wood with a twinkle. "So sometimes, Daddy just sacked up flour and marked it cornmeal."

In the 1940's, the county repaired and refurbished the farm's buildings. "It looked very good then," says Miss Wood. "The caretaker's house had white plaster and a big front porch. It also had those wide-board floors, which made it look really nice."

Photos  
by  
Ford Bond



Weeds envelop the battered Poor Farm buildings.

120



# Poor Farm

Weatherbeaten ruins are all that remain of York's early efforts at social service. [See story on page 10.]

10 YORK TOWN CRIER: July 6, 1979

*Not The poor House  
but  
like The poor House.  
Keeper's residence.*



# Yorktown celebrates victory

BY NANCY STANCILL

Times-Herald Staff Writer

It was a lovely Yorktown Day.

The receptive crowd of about 1,000 that sloped down into Redoubts Nine and Ten on the Battlefield thought so.

It was sunny Friday and the air was crisp and nippy enough for light wraps. The many flags that lined the streets and Battlefield area whipped and flapped in the breeze as the 192nd anniversary of the allied Continental and French victory was celebrated.

The morning activities included a wreath laying at the French cemetery by the Peninsula French Club and a concert by York High School Falcon Band at the Monument.

People filtered down the closed-off streets of the village. Some were led by costumed tour guides from the Yorktown Women's Club, some drifted in a customhouse reception given by the Daughters of the American Revolution and some just drifted around.

About 400 enjoyed Brunswick stew and ham biscuits prepared and served by the Women's Club.

The crowd slowly trickled to redoubts nine and 10 where the main program was begun by marching units from the service branches. They marched into view over the redoubts, followed by bands of children dressed in colonial costume.

Mrs. Ann Hawkes Hutton of the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, Lewis A. McMurran Jr. of Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission and James R. Sullivan of Colonial National Historical Park participated in raising the official Bicentennial flag over the Battlefield.

Sullivan, park superintendent, remarked that the Revolutionary War began in another unit of the National Park Service and said "we are glad to bring it to an end at Colonial National Historical Park."

Max de Montalembert, Consul General of France in Washington, spoke briefly on French participation in the battle.

"Nothing is more moving than to return to a place where a friendship was sealed that nothing can break," he said of French-American relations.

Dr. Don Higginbotham, colonial specialist and professor of history at University of North Carolina, spoke on "Yorktown: Its Place In History." He was introduced by Dr. Thad W. Tate, director of the Institute of Early American History and Culture in Williamsburg.

"Yorktown—more than any other military or naval event—reveals to us that the War of Independence was not fought in isolation and that it was no longer merely an Anglo-American family struggle," said Higginbotham.

He noted that in 1778 and 1779, France and Spain entered what was then a world war.

"England faced the threat of an invasion from across the Channel," he continued. She encountered an unsympathetic League of Armed Neutrality on

the European continent.

"There was fighting in India, at Gibraltar, on the high seas, in the West Indies and the Gulf of Mexico," he said. "These developments stretched Britain's limited resources tissue thin well before Cornwallis' meeting with destiny in the Old Dominion."

Higginbotham also noted that the Yorktown battle offered proof that the Revolution "was much more than a bushwhacking or guerrilla contest."

"As for Yorktown itself, the siege followed the rules and maxims used since the day of Vauban, the eminent French military engineer of the 17th century," he commented.

Higginbotham commented on "the really unusual degree of cooperation and coordination that marked the campaign, a campaign carried out in a day when there was no instantaneous communication or rapid mass transportation, when messengers went on horse or in packet vessels, when armies normally advanced a handful of miles a day, when ships crossed the Atlantic in six weeks with good luck, in three months with bad."

Yorktown Day is sponsored annually by the Yorktown Day Association members.



## WOODS BLEND WITH SURROUNDINGS

Nov. 9, 1973

# Engineer Keeps Parkway Looking Natural

By KATHARINE KINNIER  
Staff Reporter

YORKTOWN—Neat, natural landscaping along the Colonial Parkway is being preserved under the care of Turner L. Robinette, park engineer of the Colonial National Historical Park here.

"You are looking at a parkway that is now thirty-seven years old," Robinette said of the 13 mile green belt between Yorktown and Williamsburg.

"The present tree growth has come from previous plantings, and gives the effect of a wooded area that blends in with the surroundings," he said.

Continuing care is "guided by a land management plan drawn up many years ago by the landscape architect division of the National Park Service," Robinette said.

Vista views are spaced at intervals over the parkway's route, to facilitate a clear panorama view of the York River and the land beyond. There are clumps of plantings, and larger trees, on the slopes below these areas, he said, designed to

sunlight as well. Without a balanced diet of the two, they grow so tall in search of sunlight that they can't maintain themselves and fall over, he said.

"There will be a concerted effort in the next two years to reestablish redbud along the parkway," he said. Dogwood trees abound along the

route. "Flowering redbud and dogwood in combination are an exotic mixture," Robinette said.

"We have an occasional attack of Southern Pine Beetle," he said, "but we try to control it before it grows into an epidemic. Dutch Elm Disease gives trouble also," Robinette said.

"We are blessed with the natural cycle of honeysuckle growth," Robinette offered. It forms a barrier for encroaching grass, and holds soil firm.

Other phenomena are natural underplantings beneath many of the trees.

"Some of the cedars along

the parkway are 30 inches in diameter," Robinette said. "The Great Oak", located half a mile south of Williamsburg, is one of the older trees," he said, "and the only one emphasized by a marker. They claim it was sprouting acorns at the time of the Revolution."

minimize any sharp height contrasts for visitors traveling the parkway. "We don't change the appearance drastically during substantial replanting programs," Robinette said. "These are repeated on a five to ten year basis, depending on the availability of funds." The most of the tree species native to this area can be found along the parkway—dogwood, oaks, maples, weeping willows, locusts, beeches and poplars, among others. Many evergreens and mangle to give the impression of a green belt throughout the year. Yorktown and the surrounding area within York County. Seasonal wild flowers growing around the rivers and ponds along the parkway contribute to the varying scenes. "Redbud is a problem tree," Robinette stated. "It needs a good deal of shade, but must have some



TURNER L. ROBINETTE

# York Records Going On Microfilm

By ROBERT GRAVES  
Staff Reporter

**YORKTOWN**—Records currently being microfilmed in York County by the State Library for preservation are among the oldest in the United States, dating back to 1633, according to Herman B. West, assistant archivist for the agency.

West said that the primary goal of the local records branch of the Virginia State Library is to assure the preservation of vital local records should a disaster strike the courthouse.

"Among the considerations for microfilming is the lack of space and the fire hazards in records rooms," he said. "After microfilming, they will be stored in the State Library, where they will be available in case something happens to the originals."

He noted there are many dangers that lie outside the control of the clerk of the court, that challenge the traditional security of the fireproof vault.

"Vital records should exist in more than one copy, and in more than one location."

West said that the destruction of the Botetourt County Court House by fire in December of 1970 sparked the interest of the Senator David F. Thornton of Salem in the preservation of the vital and historical records. He introduced legislation to survey records keeping procedures to ascertain if proper precautions were being taken to preserve valuable records of historical significance.

"The survey indicated that a local records program was needed," West said. "There were 17,000 deed books in Virginia which have not been microfilmed for security."

"A second problem involves the storage conditions of the old original papers.



Assistant archivist Herman B. West, left, looks at old records with York Clerk of Court Melville I. Bryant.

"In some cases, the archives are not properly housed and cared for, but are stored in cardboard boxes in the basement or attic."

The survey sparked the passage of a bill authorizing and financing the local records program, and there are now five cameras at work across Virginia.

The local offices without security microfilm of the deeds and wills have priority in the program, to be followed by the offices without security microfilm of the other vital records.

In addition, all fading deed and will books will be microfilmed during the first year of the program.

West said the initial microfilming is expected to be complete in eight years and then the records will be microfilmed up-to-date on a periodic schedule. The time required for the microfilming in each office varies according to the

number of books to be microfilmed and the condition of the records.

York's records have had a tumultuous time with a number of journeys from one building to another, including an ice house.

There have been at least five courthouses since 1691, the first one torn down to build the second, which was destroyed by fire in 1814.

The third was blown up in 1863 by the explosion of ammunition stored by Federal troops. The fourth courthouse was destroyed by fire in 1940 and the present structure was constructed in 1955.

Bolivar Shield, clerk of court in York from 1848 to

1868, is credited with saving the county's records dating from 1633 to 1862 by taking them to the Mattaponi River and keeping them in an ice house until the end of the Civil War.

On the Eastern Shore, in

Northampton, records dating back to 1621 have been microfilmed and these are believed to be the oldest continuous records in the U.S.

York County was not formed until the 1600s and the old records at Yorktown in-

clude the old James City County records also.

York was originally named Charles River and was one of the eight shires in Virginia. Founded in 1634, the present name was given in 1643, probably in honor of James, Duke of York, the second son of Charles I.

York Clerk of Court Melville I. Bryant comments that some of the county's records were taken to Richmond during the Civil War for preservation, but these were destroyed by fire.

West noted that the priority in processing is based on the historical value of the records and on the availability of the microfilm for research.

Daily Press

## SUBURBAN / STATE SCENE

TUESDAY, NOV. 20, 1973 Page 9

# Planned Communities Date To Colonial Period

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1973

By KATHARINE KINNIER  
Staff Reporter

**YORKTOWN—**Towns established on virgin land of the Tidewater region during the colonial period began as planned communities at the behest of some individual, corporate group or governmental body. The responsible party or parties conceived a pattern of streets, dwelling sites and locations for public or institutional activities. The initial plan was pushed to completion—often by mandate.

Yorktown and Williamsburg both are examples of meticulous planning on the part of early inhabitants. Towns and villages did not arise spontaneously, as some erroneously believe.

York—or Yorktown—was originally consciously designed as a port city. And it was the most important of the new towns begun under a 1691 act, promoted by Francis Nicholson.

Other Tidewater towns, deliberately created by governmental action, were intended to provide a wide variety of functions. Some were to serve as garrison communities, agricultural centers or places for the first stages of industrial processing of mineral resources. Still others came into being as havens for religious communities, or to accommodate refugees from discrimination or persecution in Europe.

Cities like Yorktown were expected to serve as ports through which would flow

colonial exports to England, and manufactured goods from the home country.

Although legislation had directed that Yorktown be developed on land at the mouth of the York River, the directive was ignored by county officials until July 24, 1691.

At that time, the assembly issued the following order: "...that the court on the 29th day of this instant July, meet upon Mr. Benjamin Reade's land, beginning at the lower side of Smyth's Creek, and so running downward by the river towards the ferry being ye land appointed by law for a port, in order to laying out of the same for a town and doing all other things related thereto, and that the sheriff given notice to the surveyor of this county that he then and there give his attendance."

Colonel Lawrence Smith, the surveyor, soon was busy with his work, and by August 18, he had completed the boundary survey of the town in Smith's plan. Town layouts for both Yorktown and Williamsburg were similar in several ways. Yorktown employed the gridiron version, and Williamsburg developed from the more elaborate and unusual baroque design of Francis Nicholson. Both had central avenues. Williamsburg's Duke of Gloucester Street was 99 feet wide.

According to research by Charles E. Hatch Jr., historian, National Park

Service, Yorktown, "the port of Yorktown also was surveyed into 85 half acre lots" like Williamsburg. Hatch points out that "this left some seven and a half acres which was reserved for streets and ways." Only area not surveyed at this time was the Great Valley—the deep crevasse near the Yorktown Monument, extending back from shores of the York River.

The town's axis—then as now—was Main Street, which "generally bisected the fifty acres from its southeast to its northwest boundaries," Hatch continues. At that time, the street was approximately a half mile long, and constructed of dirt. Its width of thirty-three feet permitted passage for two carriages abreast.

Unlike neighboring Williamsburg, which had designated street names from the outset, "none of the Yorktown streets seems to have had an established name except Main," Hatch said. This, on occasion, also was called Broad Street—at least in the vicinity of the courthouse, Hatch said. The practice of unnamed streets continued from colonial times beyond the period of the revolution, Hatch said.

"Main Street was a straight line except for its one bend at the spot where Read Street came to cross it. Several vales or ravines, cut up from the waterfront and there was, unlike today, some rise and fall of the street level at various points,"

Hatch said. This was particularly true at the head of the Great Valley, and also where the rising grade of the Read Street vale cut across the street. Both dips are largely obscured now by road grading, though the old grades could be established. There were five direct crossings of Main Street, with an additional three entries not producing direct crossings.

"Though outside of the survey, the five-acre waterfront that separated the town proper from the York River was generally considered to be a functional part of the town, being

referred to at an early time as a common shore. The maintenance of good connecting ways between the beach and the town was recognized as fundamental, and a public function from the very beginning. Thomas Mountfort was named surveyor of the town's roads, and directed to take "immediate care to see that there be so many good and convenient landings made for Rolling or Carrying up to the said Towne, any sort of goods whatsoever, that any persons shall or may hereafter have occasions to send them by water, and to be landed and laid in the Towne, as

he shall think Fitt and necessary.

"Repair of roads and ways was a continuing problem, and at one point in 1757, it was necessary to declare an emergency and get special legislation and funding to 'widen and support' Yorktown streets even to the extent of using brick walls where necessary to keep them from being washed away by the 'hast showers of rain.' Now, only Read Street has these retaining walls, according to Hatch.

"It is quite clear that not all of the cross streets in Yorktown were opened through to the water even

when the town was at its busiest. This is still true of Church Street today. In colonial times, there was no street where Comte de Grasse now runs. And the opening of Ballard Street evidently was a mid-nineteenth century development. In at least one instance in the first half of the nineteenth century, present Ballard Street was denoted as Court House Street. Hill Road to the river was another reference to the Great Valley, with "Street by Rows," seemingly a reference to present Buckner Street.

"In a handbook issued at the time of the Centennial in 1881, only three street names were given in Yorktown-Main, Church and Keyes," Hatch said. "The latter evidently was in honor of Major General Erasmus D. Keyes who commanded the Fourth Corps in the Union Army that moved up the Peninsula in 1862. The street now is known as Nelson Street. Most present day cross street names seem to have been assigned, or re-assigned, officially, at the time of the Sesquicentennial in 1931," Hatch believes. Hatch further observes that though the name Keyes replaced that of Pearl, it would in turn be replaced by Pearl again later in the century—this at the time that the Ballard House was known for an as yet unestablished reason as "Pearl Cottage."

At the time of the foun-

ding of 1781, the court sat at the "French Ordinary," midway along the road to Williamsburg. In a rather unusual attempt to stimulate the growth of the new town, the General Assembly directed that a courthouse be erected at York, and imposed a penalty of fifty pounds sterling on each justice if the order were not carried out. The justices promptly engaged Henry Cary of Warwick County to erect a building at a cost of thirty thousand pounds of tobacco, and on Nov. 24, 1697, they were able to hold their first meeting at York. The location of this building can be found on Smith's plan—lot number 24, facing the main street at the corner of one of the cross streets leading toward the river. It was replaced in 1733 by a larger brick structure that served for many years, surviving considerable damage during the British occupation in the Revolutionary War before succumbing to fire in 1814. On the courthouse lot also stood the first jail, completed by 1698, and replaced by a larger building in 1737.

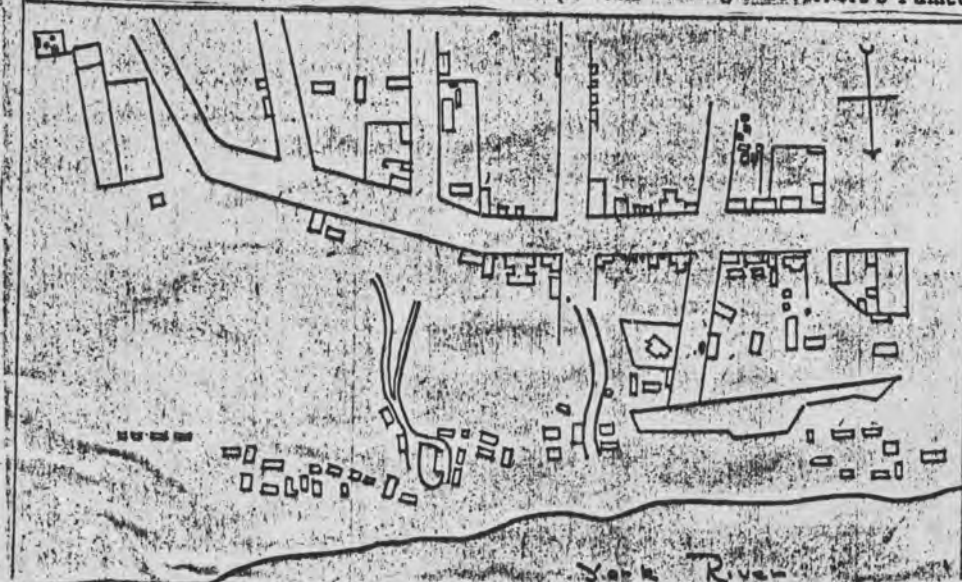
Francis Nicholson, although then governor of Maryland, retained a deep interest in the town that had been established under the legislation that he had promoted. He had offered, and presumably paid, five pounds sterling toward the completion of the courthouse. He offered in 1696 to subscribe four times this

amount for the construction of a brick church if completed within two years. Soon this structure (present-day Grace Episcopal Church) built of marl rather than brick, took shape not far from the courthouse. During these early years of the town, there must have been something of a building boom, for lot sales were brisk, and York quickly developed into a thriving community.

Williamsburg's plan also proved highly successful. Both it and Yorktown stood in marked contrast to Jamestown with its cramped and medieval housing.

A contemporary author wrote of Yorktown: "You perceive a great Air of Opulence amongst the inhabitants, who have some of them built themselves houses, equal in magnificence to many of our superb ones at St. James; the most considerable houses are of Brick; some handsome ones of Wood, all built in the modern Taste; and the lessor Sort, of Plaster. There are some very pretty Garden Spots in the town; and the avenues leading to Williamsburg and Norfolk, are prodigiously agreeable."

But it was over these twelve miles of now muddy roads to Williamsburg, that many of Williamsburg's dead and wounded were carried from the battlefields at Yorktown to fill an improvised hospital in Williamsburg's Governors's Palace.



Map of Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781, showing street plan and locations of buildings. Few of Yorktown's roads were named until after the Revolution.

## Early Grave, Too

# 'York Village' Named Landmark

By Maxine Lutz

"York Village," the forerunner of Yorktown, and the grave of Major William Gooch, which has the second oldest legible tombstone in Virginia, have both been named to the register of the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission.

The first settlement on the York River was variously called York, Old York and York Village. It was patented by Governor John Harvey in 1631 when he acquired 750 acres of land and called it York Plantation. The land adjoins Wormley Creek and is now the property of the federal government and is used as the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve Training Center.

The grave of Major William Gooch is the only remaining surface indication of the village. It is marked by the first documented decorated tombstone in the English colonies. Gooch was a burgess from York County and was elected to the Governor's Council in March of 1655. He died that same year at the age of 29 and is believed to have been the uncle of Sir William Gooch, acting governor of Virginia from 1727 to 1749.

The site of York Village, around the location of the tomb, is considered to have immense archaeological potential. Court trials were held there as early as 1635 and in 1658, Captain Robert Daldrey's house was rented as a courthouse.

County records indicate that in 1622 a dunking stool was built near the place "where it is supposed the town for York River will be built." A prison, stock and pillory were built in the same location. According to historical documents, York Village had a clergyman in 1633, and in 1667 a new church was built, like the one which preceded it, around Gooch's tomb.



Maxine Lutz

This is not a bicycle rack. This is the protection provided the first documented decorated tombstone in the English colonies. The 2 1/2 inch iron pipes were placed over the tomb at its site at the U. S. Coast Guard Reserve Training Center in Yorktown.

The church was standing, perhaps in ruins, in 1781 when its location was noted on several Revolutionary war maps. Bishop William Meade wrote in 1834 that the walls were still standing to a height of several feet.

It is believed that Henry Howe was describing the then-visible remains of York Village when he wrote in 1846 "about a mile and a half below Yorktown, on what is called the Temple farm, are many old chimneys, indicating the site of an early settlement."

Historians theorize the settlement was moved two miles to the west and established as Yorktown in

1691 because that location was preferred as a port.

In 1861, Confederate General John B. Magruder was given the responsibility of defending the Lower Peninsula against an invasion toward Richmond. Magruder constructed a defensive line of earthworks

across the Peninsula, making use of some existing Revolutionary War embankments at Yorktown. The trenches east of the Gooch tomb were a part of the 1862 fortifications.

In nominating the site to the National Register of Historic

Places, the Virginia organization said archaeological excavation could possibly determine the extent of the remains of the colonial settlement and perhaps could provide further information about life in Virginia in the 17th century.



(Staff Photo by Mark Schirkofsky)

Yorktown's Town Trustees are, seated, left to right, Mrs. Mary Mathews, Mrs. Floyd Holloway, vice chairman; Mrs. Edith Elliott, clerk; standing, J. R. Chandler, secretary-treasurer; John P. Wornom, chairman, and Thomas H. Gillis, member and past chairman.

## Town Commons Controlled By Yorktown's Trustees

By KATHARINE KINNIER  
Staff Reporter

YORKTOWN - Yorktown's Town Trustees have continued from colonial times to the present day, with but one possible cessation of activity.

John P. Wornom is present chairman.

The trustees today are responsible for that portion of land never subdivided by the crown, when the English colony was controlled by the Mother Country. The present-day Town Commons is the only land parcel for which the trustees now are responsible. They also are responsible for the wharf. From 1691 and after, the first trustees were the crown's authorized representatives in this country. They administered sales of Yorktown's original 85 lots. Today, Yorktown streets bear the names of four of these early trustees - Buckner, Ballard, Read and Smith, according to L. R. O'Hara, longtime Yorktown resident.

Originally, the Great Valley was included in the crown land not subdivided. Wornom said he understood that this was used as a street for oxcarts carrying tobacco down to the wharves for export. The wharves then were constructed more as causeways, Wornom said.

"At real low water, when a strong west wind is blowing," he said, "the rock remains still can be seen in the water. The Colonial National Historical Park now administers the Great Valley.

The Town Commons today runs from the upper end of the pier on which the post office is situated, exclusive of the post office building and three feet around it, up to Comte de Grasse Street, and includes all the remaining land out to the water mark fronting Martiau, Buckner Ballard, Water, Church, Read, Smith and Comte de Grasse streets.

The trustees do not own any of the land, but are responsible for it, Wornom advised. Most of it is beach area.

"It's ridiculous the way people treat it," Wornom said, with reference to the litter thrown there by beach users, and which the trustees from time to time pay to have removed. At other times, they have acted to clear the beach of debris caused by unavoidable natural causes. Quantities of seaweed washed in by the tides, he said, had to be hauled away by dump trucks.

Revenue for these programs is derived from monies realized from the lease of a wharf restaurant building, and from a portion of the funds of the Alcoholic

Beverage Control Board allocated to local areas.

From hearsay, a period during the late 1880's apparently gave the trustees added impetus. At that time, it's Wornom's understanding, the townspeople complained so much about squatters moving into the commons area, that the trustees were reorganized through a special act of the Virginia legislature. Passage of an act by the General Assembly of Virginia insured continuation of the town trusteeship.

Town trustees are appointed for two year terms by a judge of the circuit court, and meet monthly at the courthouse. Serving with Wornom are Mrs. Floyd Holloway, vice chairman; J. R. Chandler, secretary-treasurer; Mrs. Mary Mathews, member, and Thomas H. Gillis, member and past chairman. Mrs. Edith Elliott is employed as a clerk.

# Ceremonies Mark Yorktown Day<sup>131</sup>

By ROBERT GRAVES  
Staff Reporter

**YORKTOWN** — Rain and chilly winds failed to hamper Yorktown Day observances Saturday as persons from near and far attended activities throughout the day in the town and on the famous battlefield where the American Revolution was won.

Ceremonies at the French Cemetery started cold and somber, shrouded in rain, with Francois de La Gorce, minister, Embassy of France, laying a wreath in memory of Frenchmen who lost their lives in the Revolution.

Later, the day brightened with a return of sunshine, but cold winds continued through most of the observances.

The simple ceremony at the cemetery was presided over by Robert Caminade of the sponsoring Peninsula French Club. Among those participating were Dr. Jules Pierre, president of France-American Inc. and Marcel Villanueva, secretary-general of the organization.

American and French flags flanked the large marble cross, which was brought to the battlefield from France a few years ago especially for the ceremony through the efforts of Villanueva, with the cooperation of the National Park Service.

Taps were played by Sandy Hancock and Dennis Holland from the Tabb High School Band, and the school's Tiger Band played a concert at the Victory Monument.

Following a colorful parade of flags with units of the Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, Drum and Bugle Corps, a wreath was placed at the Monument to the Victory and Alliance during mid-morning ceremonies.

Thomas J. Gillis presided over Yorktown Day activities during the morning and afternoon, while The Rev. George E. Massay, gave the invocation and memorial prayer.

The wreath was placed by Chief Historian James N. Haskett and Chief Ranger Ralph D. Maxwell of the Colonial National Historical Park. Honorary wreath bearers were Mrs. Floyd Holloway, vice chairman of the Trustees of the Town of York; and Mrs. William A. Beptien past regent of the Comte de Grasse Chapter, of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

A color guard and flag bearers were provided by Marine and Navy units of the U.S. Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown.

Honorary flag bearers included Thomas P. Nelson, Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution; Col. John B. Phillips, captain of the Color Guard, Sons of the Revolution in Virginia; Rodney H.C. Schmidt, national president, National Society Children of the American Revolution; Leonard J. Panaggio, first vice president, The American Friends of Lafayette; Dexter Stearns Haven, member of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Rhode Island; Mrs. Carl E. Stark, state regent, Virginia Daughters of the American

Revolution; James R. Sullivan, superintendent of the Colonial Park; and Mrs. Joseph Douglas Deal, national organizing secretary, National Society Daughter of the American Colonists.

A salute by the 560th Military Police Company, headquarters, Ft. Monroe, and a concert by the U.S. Atlantic Fleet Ceremonial Band, under the direction of Chief Musician Robert A. Bell preceded the military parade which opened patriotic exercises on the battlefield Saturday afternoon.

The military parade was composed of Marine and Naval units of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet and led by grand marshal, Lt. Col. Arthur B. Clark, commanding officer, Marine Barracks, U.S. Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown.

Members of the Yorktown Women's Club and youngsters of the Yorktown area added authenticity to the occasion with their colonial attire. The women served as ushers during ceremonies, provided a luncheon at the Grace Episcopal Church Parish Hall and conducted walking tours along Yorktown's

famous Main Street.

Preceding the principal address by Rear Adm. Jeremiah A. Denton Jr., commandant of the Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Francois de La Gorce brought greetings from France. Denton was introduced by Capt. Randall W. Young, commanding officer of the U.S. Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown.

Among dignitaries attending were Maj. Gen. B.E. Huffman Jr., chief of staff, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Ft. Monroe; Brig. Gen. John H. Miller, deputy commander Fleet Marine Force Atlantic; Brig. Gen. George A. Edwards Jr., assistant deputy chief of staff for logistics, Tactical Air Command, Langley Air Force Base; Capt. Leslie D. High, commanding officer, U.S. Coast Guard Reserve Training Center, Yorktown; Maj. J. Thomas Burch Jr., president, VA. SAR; Herbert W. Jackson III, president, Sons of the Revolution; Mrs. Fred Krueger, senior national president, CAR; P. Hairston Seawell, president, American Friends of Lafayette.



Francois de La Gorce brings greetings from France

**DAILY PRESS, Newport News, Va., Sunday, October 20, 1974**



**Wreaths honor French soldiers who died during the siege of Yorktown**

# Centennial Victory Monument

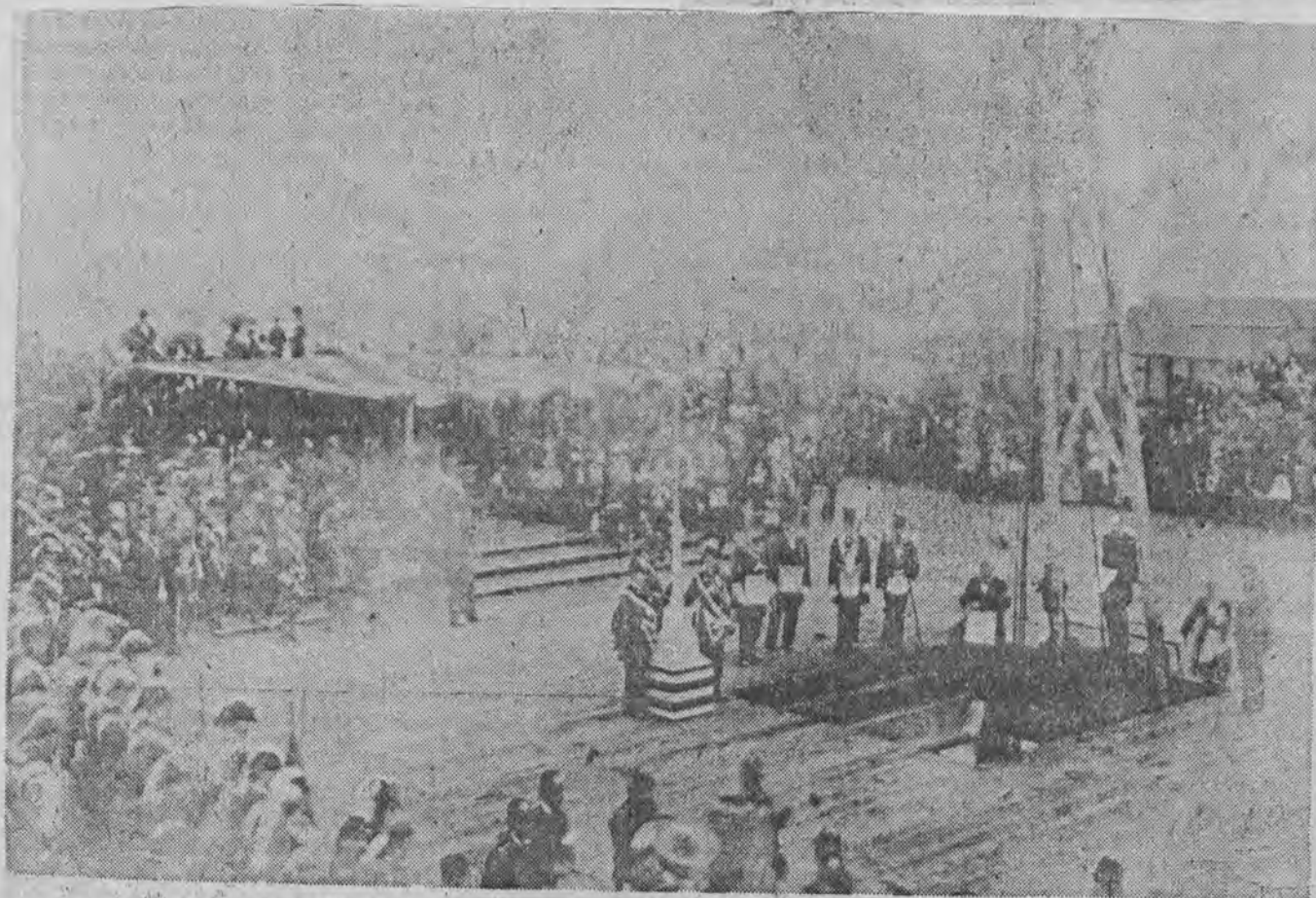
133

By PARKE ROUSE JR.

## Ceremony Is Revisited

### Daily Press

Newport News-Hampton, Va., July 15, 1979



Cornerstone ceremonies for Victory Monument in 1881, Yorktown surrender centennial.

Oct. 19, 1881, was a big day on the Virginia Peninsula. The president of the United States, his cabinet and most of Congress had gathered at Yorktown for the centennial of George Washington's victory. To reach the tiny York River town, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway had hurriedly run a track from Richmond to Newport News, with a spur from Lee Hall to Yorktown.

Everybody wanted to see President Chester Arthur lay the cornerstone for the Victory Monument that Congress had authorized.

Down at Newport News, a new locomotive got up steam to pull the first passenger train out of the siding at Nineteenth Street and the James River. The engine was delivered by a four-masted schooner a few days before, rolled onto the new switch track and hitched to two day coaches for the 25-mile trip to Yorktown.

One of the passengers was young Charles William Baines, who accompanied his mother and father. Sixty-five years later in 1946 he described the great day in a talk to the Pioneers Club and it was as fresh as yesterday.

"It was a gala day in the 'fishing

village' of Newport News," Baines recalled. "Everybody turned out — men, women, boys and girls, and the babies — both black and white — who made their way down to the waterfront to that first C&O passenger 'depot' — then an uncovered railroad switch track leading to the edge of the James River ... The 'depot' was only about two blocks north of a fishing camp on the shore, nearby Mr. George Benjamin West's general store and house ..."

133

Built by the great California rail mogul, Collis Huntington, the C&O had transformed the village of Newport News overnight into a boom town. Invited by Huntington to make the first trip were leading citizens, all dressed in sombre Victorian finery.

Foremost of the passengers was George Ben West, who had sold Huntington land for his rail terminal and become wealthy overnight. West had a general store and house at Eighteenth Street and River Road (later to become a sailors' Saloon Row known as Hell's Half Acre). Already he was known as Newport News' richest citizen.

With the portly West was his niece, Emily Smith, later to be Mrs. William E. Barrett. Others were E. T. Ivy, whose farmlands became part of the

East End, and Walter B. Livezey, Roy J. Charles and other moguls of the town.

When the train finally pulled out of Newport News, young Charles Baines was ecstatic. "I will never forget the strange thrill and emotions as that locomotive began to puff, snort and screech," he told members of the Pioneers many years later on the anniversary of the Oct. 19 ride.

Puffing up the single track toward Richmond, the Centennial Special soon reached Lee Hall. There it switched onto the temporary spur which Huntington had ordered to permit other special trains, coming east via Richmond and Williamsburg, to reach the Centennial site. The tracks ended at a makeshift depot close to the Civil War Cemetery on Yorktown's outskirts.

Besides President Arthur, who had been sworn in a month earlier on the assassination of President James Garfield, there were other famous men to see. One was General William Tecumseh Sherman of "Marching Through Georgia" fame. Another was General Fitzhugh Lee, CSA, soon to be elected Virginia's governor. Ambassadors and supreme court justices

were there, too.

Young Baines was struck especially by the "long line of horse-drawn carts and wagons loaded with fine, fat York River oysters, brought into the fairgrounds by local oystermen to assist in feeding the crowds of visitors." With a touch of bravado, he added that "One could satisfy one's appetite with these large, super-flavored bivalves served on the half-shell, with all the fixings, for just ten cents per dozen. And hot coffee, like York farmers' wives know how to make it, with real cream right off the farm for five cents a cup."

134


The ceremonial 1881 trip had an odd sequel. When residents of York County realized that their spur track was only temporary, they indignantly prepared to file suit for a court injunction forbidding the Chesapeake and Ohio to abandon service to Yorktown. But Collis Huntington was not to be caught napping. He had never planned to offer permanent service to Yorktown and he refused to be forced to.

Accordingly, wrote Baines, "the railway company, without fuss or notice, assembled their forces and suddenly swooped down on the unsuspecting community. They took up the entire trackage from Yorktown to the main line of the Chesapeake and Ohio at Lee Hall on a certain Sunday night, loaded the materials on freight cars and took it to the main line tracks at Lee Hall so as to complete the removal job before the court had an opportunity to act."

Added Baines, "Imagine the chagrin of the Yorktown men on that Monday morning when they awakened to find not only the railroad service abandoned but the railroad itself gone! It was equal to that staid old town's disappointment some years before when it learned that Collis P. Huntington had decided to locate the Chesapeake and Ohio terminal at Newport News instead of at Yorktown, as had been originally planned."

With the 200th anniversary of the Yorktown victory approaching in 1981, imaginative residents of Newport News are contemplating a re-enactment of the C&O's first 1881 passenger train. At the suggestion of Alexander C. Brown, the Newport News History Committee has named Andrew Palentino as chairman of a subcommittee to plan a rerun on Oct. 19, 1981, when another president of the United States is expected to be in Yorktown.

This time, they'll find the Victory Monument in place (it was finally finished in 1884). As for the "super-flavored bivalves on the half-shell" that 1881 visitors enjoyed, there'll be some of those, too, but not at ten cents a dozen.



Yorktown Victory Monument as it appears today.

Newport News-Hampton, Va., November 4, 1979

## Poquoson Residents Often Rallied To Support Education

By PHIL TIMP  
Staff Reporter

POQUOSON — Miss Carrie smiles that sweet, spirited, 85-year-old smile of hers and almost shouts it: "You can tell them we're a city now!"

"Rural is when we went in the fields and had our chickens and hogs. You never hear of people with fowl or hogs any more down here. We're not the Poquoson we were 40 or 30 or even 25 years ago."

It's not that Carrie White Moore is ashamed of what this small, still-serene waterfront community and its six separate post office settlements run by farmers and fishermen used to be.

It's just that she has seen her people battle and overcome adversity all century long with an unrelenting independent spirit, the same spirit reflected in smile.

She was in the midst of the struggle when it began about 1912. Foremost in the minds of the clannish families making up the Poquoson district, a magisterial district of York County, was a desire for education. This desire meant more than the three or four two-room school houses stuffed with children trying to learn the three R's through the fourth or fifth grade.

It meant a high school for advanced education. It ultimately meant higher taxes for the people of Poquoson district.

The school, built about 1910, was York County's first and only high school for some time and was along Poquoson Avenue where Poquoson Middle School stands today.

Carrie Moore recalls her 21 years as a teacher in that "big, white building." She says York County students from the Seaford and other distant settlements arrived at the school by horse and buggy on Sunday afternoons and she would board them in her home during the week until they left to return home

Friday afternoon.

Proud of their success in establishing a local high school on their own, the people of the small settlements known as Messick, Jeffs, Earnest, Poquoson, Moores, and Odd became a closer-knit group.

"People up here married someone down the road, and someone down there would marry someone up here in what used to be Jeffs," Miss Carrie said. "That's what helped bring these people together."

Residents were self-sufficient, with their own gardens and farm animals. Miss Carrie remembers her mother taking her to town (Hampton) in the spring and fall by horse and buggy.

Large groups of children from one settlement or another would make hay rides to Hampton on Sundays. But the people of Bull Island mainly stayed in their little communities and grew together, cemented by their school.

In 1932, growth in Poquoson district and in York County again dictated need for another larger school, and this required more sacrifice for Poquoson's residents.

Some years later, in the early 1950s, they found themselves faced with even greater problem ... a threat to the very existence of their high school.

The York County School Board wanted a more central location for a high school, and a committee appointed by the State Board of Education recommended that such a school be built.

But this didn't change the thinking of the people of Poquoson district, who were determined they wouldn't lose their school.

Former Mayor G. S. Forrest warned the York board that if the school "was thrust on Poquoson, its residents would form a township."

Forrest recalls the political hassling among state legislators before Poquoson's residents overwhelmingly

voted to split from York County and become a separate town with a separate school district in 1952.

"The school district, not the township, is what outsiders opposed most," Forrest remembers.

"From that time on, we were sort of an orphan. We were out on our own, divorced from the county, and we didn't have much knowledge about how to run a town or about finances," Forrest said. "So, as in the past, our people were called on to make considerable financial sacrifices."

Residents of the new town of Poquoson paid town taxes, and they paid

county taxes for the use of York County legislative and judicial offices.

Poquoson was struck hard in 1954, when Amoco Oil Co. decided to put a refinery in York County. This increased the county tax base, and that led to a change in the thinking of some of Poquoson's people.

"What had been about a 90 percent united people for the town suddenly became about 50-50," Forrest said. "This spelled trouble for Poquoson because some of the people talked about going back with York County."

Through the heated days of this struggle, education again unified Po-

quoson. Residents felt a need for an elementary school to replace the dilapidated old wooden structure which had been the first high school.

Needing money from outside sources, Forrest joined long-time Poquoson resident Carroll Forrest and town attorney Hunter Andrews in approaching Department of Education officials in Washington for assistance. One week later, they were notified the town would receive \$65,000 for the building.

"This built our confidence considerably and by this time we had more know-how politically," Forrest said.

"We were growing together."

But opinions about Poquoson's status remained divided until about 1966, and the town officials had to raise taxes considerably above those in York County for the town to survive.

In the late 1960s, York County began suffering from increased taxes, and people who had earlier abandoned their loyalty to Poquoson were once again believers in the town.

Interest in the school system began paying off also, as the town gained a reputation for providing excellent education for its children in the late

1960s and early 1970s. People who had moved to the cities and suburbs in the 1950s began returning to Poquoson.

Poquoson's independent climb reached another plateau in 1975 when the town became a city of the second class.

Since then, steady, rapid growth has filled once isolated pockets of the city which is expected to eventually reach 28,000 residents. The city is labeled the fastest growing in the state, and current population figures range from 8,000 to 10,000 residents.

Planning is cited by Mayor Howard Forrest as the major reason Poquoson has become a fast-growing Peninsula

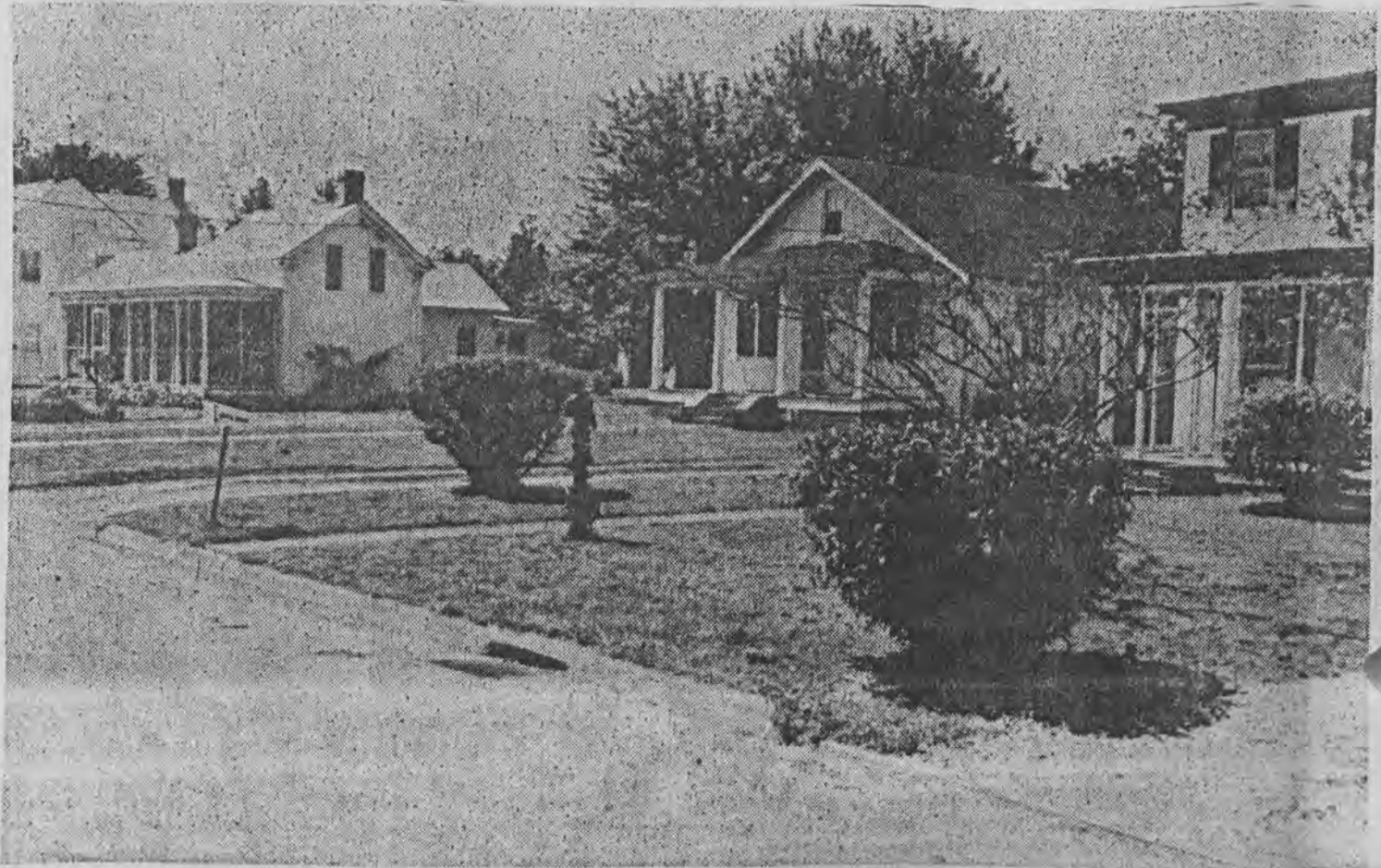
"We have definite problems ... drainage problems, sewage problems, water problems ... but these are problems other cities would be glad to have," Forrest said.

"Money isn't a real problem today in Poquoson, and I don't see any considerable increase in the tax rate here in the near future. The only growth in taxes would be to compensate for inflation."

Poquoson officials are now planning an extensive parks and recreation program including a swimming pool, ball fields and bike trails. The city's growth has prompted expansion of schools, including a \$425,000 addition to the elementary school now being started.



Fishing boats can often be seen in the waters of Poquoson.



## Smith Cemetery

by Payton Harcum

"Ashland", home of Henry Smith, was located on the upper western branch of Back River and on Wythe Creek. Ashland had its own brick kiln and its own mill. Like other plantations, it had a family burial site.

When Henry Smith's wife, Martha, died in 1850, there was need for a family burial site on the plantation. Henry Smith imported bricks from England to build a vault. He could have used bricks made on the plantation, but he wanted the best he could get his hands on. Five others were buried alongside Martha in the vault. They were Henry Smith, their children Robert Henry Smith and Sara Smith Curtis, and two friends, Walter Martin, and Frances Topping Watkins.

Over one hundred and twenty years have passed since the first burial. The descendants of Henry Smith have inherited a beautiful and historic place of burial from their ancestor Henry Smith (1798-1866).

# Yorktown Onion Attracts Horticulture Enthusiasts 139

By KATHARINE KINNIER  
Staff Reporter

**YORKTOWN** — Yorktown is historically famous as one of America's earliest settlements. It is known militarily as the surrender site of Lord Cornwallis' English troops in the Revolutionary War. To horticulturalists and gardeners, Yorktown is most interesting as the area in which the Yorktown Onion grows.

The deep wine-colored flower heads of the Yorktown Onion can be seen growing in profusion at points along the York County portion of the Colonial Parkway which runs between Yorktown and Williamsburg. They can be spotted in irregular islands which grass mowers leave in an effort to preserve and propagate the unusual SPECIMENS. The onions also may be found on the battlefield and throughout the town.

According to the National Park Service, which has taken measures to protect it, the onion has adapted to growing wild only in this part of the United States — but not without changes. In the late 1930's, the Yorktown Onion was described as having six-foot stems and five inch diameter flower heads. Today, it has three-foot stems and three inch flower heads. The reduction in size may have been due in part to changing weather

conditions throughout the years, or to the constant mowing that was practiced, the Park Service says.

The Yorktown Onion has had several names, such as wild leek and giant wild garlic, but Yorktown Onion seems the most descriptive. It is a very rare variety of the subspecies *Allium atroviolaceum*, *Allium scorodoprasum*, (as identified by Liberty Hyde Bailey in 1938). It grows only in York County, Virginia, the park service states.

A native of the Caucasus



Jim Jennings, Daily Press photographer, inspects the wine-colored flower heads of the Yorktown Onion growing along the Yorktown-to-Williamsburg Parkway.

"There are ten to fifteen times as many Yorktown Onions today, as there were two years ago," a park service official advises. "Five years ago," he said, "there was only a patch or two."

Tampering with the onion — in any manner — is prohibited by the park service. It is illegal, the park service says, to dig, remove, destroy or otherwise hamper the onion's growth.

Permission to possess the onion — or its seed — is granted only to universities for research purposes, the official said.

## THE AMERICAN OIL COMPANY

### Yorktown Refinery

The American Oil Company's Yorktown Refinery is located on a 700-acre site on the York River. Just east of historic Yorktown, it is situated among battlesites of the Revolutionary War.

The refinery processes both foreign and domestic crude oil. The finished products are distributed in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Washington, D.C. Shipments are also made to Philadelphia, New York, and New England.

A large part of the crude oil comes from Venezuela. Crude is also produced and purchased from an affiliate, American International Oil Company. This international company has major operations in Australia and Iran.

The refinery was completed in the Spring of 1957. Its site was chosen after investigation of forty locations in twelve different states. It was chosen because of its deep-water pier facility, good water supply, adequate sources of power, and the availability of highly skilled labor. Shortly after the site was selected, VEPCO announced its intention to build a plant adjacent to the refinery.

In December, 1956, just sixteen months after the ground breaking, the first gasoline was produced. With this, Virginia had its first refinery, and York County its first industrial plant. Today, the refinery remains as the state's only petroleum refining facility.

The refinery receives an average of eighty-five tanker-loads of crude oil each year. It ships out finished petroleum products using many forms of transportation. These forms of transportation include tankers, barges, railroad tank cars, and tank trucks.

The pier reaches more than 3,300 feet into the river. It is the key point

- 2 -

in handling incoming and outgoing products. It can accommodate (at the same time) a 700 ft. super-tanker, a 550 ft. tanker, and two 250 ft. barges. Twelve pipelines extend the entire length of the pier. They transport crude oil and other products. The total storage capacity of the tanks is about 2,250,000 barrels. From the pier, the crude oil is transported three miles (through the pipeline) to the storage tank. From here it is piped to the combination unit where it is refined.

The refinery is connected to Colonial Pipeline, the nation's largest product pipeline. Through this pipeline is received gas blending stocks from Texas City, Texas. These stocks are included in products made at Yorktown.

The refining process is a long, complicated procedure. It involves many scientific procedures and a mass of knowledge and skill. Incorporated in this are many terms common to the refining process. Some of these terms are:

Cat Cracker - slang term for catalytic cracking unit

Catalytic Cracking - breaking down of hydrocarbon molecules into two or more molecules through the application of heat and pressure in the presence of a catalyst

Dry Gas - a gas containing little or no gasoline vapor

Octane Rating - a measure of the anti-knock value of gasoline, the higher the octane number, the higher the value.



### Amoco Pays Big Tax Bill

James K. Thomson, manager of accounting services of the Amoco Refinery at Yorktown gives York County check for \$423,160.92 representing the company's

property taxes for 1974. Accepting is Mrs. Arlene Brake, manager of the York County Treasurer's Office.

Bloodmobile *Donation*

$\$423,160.92 = 1974 \text{ Taxes}$   
*from Refinery*



## Tax time

Tax time brings \$2 million into Peninsula coffers from Virginia Electric and Power Co. Presenting the largest share, \$985,844, to York County, where Vepco's power station is located, is N.E. Roberts (right). County treasurer A. Glenn Page happily accepts. Other payments include \$481,885 to Newport News, \$444,979 to Hampton, \$79,075 to James City County and \$24,497 to Williamsburg.

1973 December

## Amoco pays York tax of \$424,134

American Oil Co. has delivered a tax check for \$424,134 to York County.

The check, for payment of real estate and personal property taxes, is the second largest the county received this year. Virginia Electric and Power Co. was the county's largest contributor, according to treasurer A. Glenn Page.

# INDEX

Amoco Refinery	141-144
Bicentennial movie, "The World Turned upside down"	111-113
Bracken, Rev. John	101-102
Bracken's Pond	101
Bugeye (log canoe)	49-50
Burwell, James, grave	45
Centennial observances, 1891	65- <del>66</del> , 133-134
Colonial Parkway	122
Cornwallis Cave	44
Customhouse	57-59
Eldred, Mr. and Mrs. Charles	78
Fire Station, Bethel	93-94
Gilley, Willard	91-92
Gooch, Sir William	127
Grace Church	56
Hatch, Charles E., Jr.	81-88
Historic Triangle	97-98
Hogg, Judge William Edward	55
Kiskiack	68
Lee House	68
McNorton, Dr. and Mrs. N.F.	47-48
National Park Service	97-98
Nelson House	51-54
Neufville, J. S. de	19-20
Old Fields	14
Peninsula map (Civil War)	2
Peninsula Campaign " "	4-5
Penniman	17
Poor House	117-120
Poquoson	79-80, 135-136
Route 17 growth	109-110

Scott, Sen. William L.	78
Seaford	95-96
Ships	99-100
Slab Town	60
Smith Cemetery, Poquoson	137
Sparrer, J.W.	49- 50
Stryker, Dr. H.M.	71-74
Surrender Field Flags	35-41
Surrender Monument	5
 Victory Monument	 6, 65
 Wainwright Store	 60-64
Williamsburg street plan (colonial)	125-126
 York County Courthouses	 27-32
York County Records	27-29, 123-124
York County sewers	77
"York Village"	127
Yorktown Battlefield	1, 46
Yorktown Battlefield--Archaeology	103-108
Yorktown Battlefield--Reconstruction	81-86
Yorktown Day, 1973	121
Yorktown Day, 1974	131-132
Yorktown map, 1781	3
Yorktown National Cemetery	6
Yorktown onion	139
Yorktown pictures	7-14, 89-90
Yorktown street lights	69-70
Yorktown Trustees	16, 69-70, 129
Yorktown Visitor Center	33-34
Yorktown street plan (colonial)	125-126